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# Janus on Sion,

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OR

PAST AND TO COME.

BY

CHRISTIAN EMANUEL, Esa.

*Geo. Ensor*

—————Mysterious power  
Reveal'd, yet unreveal'd, darkness in light!  
Number in unity! Our joy, our dread!  
'Trine, unutterable, unconceiv'd!  
Absconding, yet demonstrable great God.

CHURCHEY.

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Janus on Sion,  
OR  
PAST AND TO COME.

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CHAP. I.

*Miracles of the Old Testament.*

WHEN such commotion has been excited in the religious world; when three potentates have concluded a Christian treaty; when the ministers of the sovereigns of Europe have established an everlasting peace in the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity; when we had almost obtained in London an Association of theological booksellers, as we have long enjoyed the Society for the suppression of Vice; when Prayer-Book and Homily societies, and Bible societies, central and eccentric, urban and suburban, have been formed by Protestants and Dissenters, who distribute at home and abroad, by sea and land, hundreds of thousands of volumes of the Scriptures in all languages; when such efforts are made, to convert Jews in England, and Caffres and Hindus in Africa and the East; when the works of Hannah

More and Mr. Wilberforce—the *alphabets* of the Innocents, are rivalled by their aspiring disciples; when the Apocalypse is illustrated by some ghostly author once a week: at such a time a compendium of the most important particulars, which constitute the national Church of England established by law, may be instructive.

I divide this summary into seven chapters; in which I shall successively review the Miracles of the Old Testament—the Miracles of the New—the Prophecies of the Old—the Prophecies of the New—the Mysteries—the Morality—and the Consolation afforded by the Christian religion.

As the Old Testament is the foundation of the New, both participating one identical system, I will commence with the miracles of the Old, not because they transcend those of the New Testament, but because they anticipate them in order of time, as the flocks of quails preceded the manna in the wilderness. To begin with Genesis.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” On this brief sentence, volumes have been written. It has been inquired who speaks? and again, on what authority? what is meant by the beginning? It has been asked what God? And there were ancient heretics, who insisted “that the God of the Jews, the creator of the mundane system, was not the supreme deity.”—It has been asked, what means created? It has

been answered triumphantly, making all out of nothing. Many pious men have attempted also to fix the chronology of the creation. The Hebrew text reckons 4004 years from that period to the birth of Christ. The Samaritan, 4305. The Septuagint, 5270. Even the Vatican and the Alexandrian copies of the Septuagint,\* disagree in this particular; yet some have disputed whether the Sun, on the sixth day, were in the Lion or the Ram, while Julius Africanus insisted that the world was made on the first of September, and was 5508 years, three months, and twenty-five days old at the birth of Christ. It may appear perhaps that I have dwelt rather long on this commencing sentence; but the reader should observe that Horsley† affirms demonstratively “every sentence of the Bible is from God, and every man is interested in the meaning of it.”

“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” —“And God said, let there be light, and there was light”—what light? perhaps *the spirit which moved upon the face of the waters*, which was con-

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\* Usher admitted the account of the Septuagint version, in order to moderate the prejudices of ecclesiastics on that subject; but he said that version was destroyed by fire, and that the existing Alexandrian version was made under Philometer.

† Sermons, vol. i. p. 7.

gregated into one great *ignis fatuus*.—" And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night, and the evening and the morning were the first day." This has perplexed many, who have inquired how day and evening and morning could exist without the sun. Mr. Townsend in his life of Moses, admits this to be prosaically impossible—he adds however, " that in perfect conformity to prophetic language, the term *day* may be referred to a period in general." True: and it would be strange if the same power which created a world out of nothing, should not employ language with uncontrollable license in relating this achievement.

The second day's creation being effected, and the third day's also, on the fourth day " God said, let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night," &c. " And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." La Place\* disregards this arrangement, saying, that we are often de-

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\* Quelques partisans des causes finales ont imaginé que la lune avait été donnée à la terre pour l'éclairer pendant les nuits. Dans ce cas la nature n'aurait point atteinte le but qu'elle se serait proposée; puisque souvent nous sommes privés à la fois de la lumière du soleil et celle de la lune," &c.—*Système du Monde*, tom. ii, p. 91.



prived of the light both of the Sun and the Moon. It is also remarkable that in Genesis, the earth is called into being, and even organized before the stars; yet it is said in Job, that when “the foundation of the earth was laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”—c. 37. v. 7. On the fifth day, God began his day’s work by creating great whales, &c.

On the sixth, “God said, let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness, and let *them*,” &c. *Us* and *them* in this passage have caused infinite perplexity; by *us* it is questionable, whether God addressed a consistory of angels—though perhaps it rather intimates a parlance between the three-in-one. *Them* in the same sentence has also been regarded with equal distress, and particularly because it is stated in v. xxvii. and xxviii. “in the image of God created he him, male and female created he *them*. And God blessed *them*, and God said unto *them*, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth,” &c. This command of *us* to *them* is made by God to Adam before the existence of Eve, and hence it has been imagined that Adam was originally an hermaphrodite, and that he had by some means a power of producing his own kind by himself. That Adam was so gifted receives some support also from an Orphic verse, in which Jupiter enjoys the *epicene* prerogative,

Ζεύς ἀρσὴν γένετο. Ζεύς ἀμβροτός ἐπλετο νυμφῇ.

It occurs to me also to offer here, for the consideration of the admirers of Messrs Bryant, Faber, Davies, and Christie,—whether Adam and Jupiter were not the same, for Duport has proved the identity of Homer and Solomon. Mr. Christie particularly indulges in the most airy and luminous speculations; as in his *Disquisition on Etruscan Vases*, he says, “the Chinese feast of Lanterns, no doubt, was equally designed to inforce the immortality of the soul, by the ingenious and pleasing medium of moving transparencies.” I hope this elegant and ingenious scholar will not forget to place Mr. Winsor, inventor of the Gas-lights, among the modern contributors to the verity of that splendid dogma. Yet unfortunately for Mr. Christie’s opinion, Sir G. Staunton\* informs the world, “few in China carry their objects to be attained by devotion beyond this life;”—for in China, there is no established† priesthood, and the civil magistrate has ample authority, by the simple exertions of temporal dominion.

I cannot dismiss the union of productive powers supposed to be enjoyed by Adam, without observing, that Aristophanes‡ makes Socrates

\* Embassy to China.

† The religion of the state of China, cannot properly be said to have any priests whatsoever. Barrow, vol. ii. p. 267.

‡ Την τε θηλειαν καλεις Αλεκτρονα κατὰ ταυτο και την ἀρσῆνα. *Nubes*, act ii. sc. 1.



instruct his scholar Strepsiades in the compound gender of pullets. The same Aristophanes, in Plato's *Convivium*\* says, that "man and woman originally made one person, that *they* consulted how they might attack the Gods, on this account they were split into two; and that Jupiter said, if they ever again rebelled, he would re-cleave them, and reduce them to hopping." This quotation I consider pregnant with theological matter of high import, on the subject of *us* and *them*, which in phraseology, resembles a verse in a Golden Legend published by Dr. D. Clarke, from a manuscript in the Cottonian library,

"He was a woman, that was his name."

It appears however to me, that the wonderful creature Adam, was the *first-born man*, to use an expression of the antediluvian poet, Mr. Montgomery, in his *World before the Flood*:

"Thus music's empire in the soul began—

"The first-born poet rul'd the first-born man."

Yet the Reverend Thomas Webster, in 1814, proves, he says, that the world was created and inhabited 12,000 years before Adam. How far the Quarterly Reviewers coincide with the pre-

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\* Opera Omnia, p. 1186. Perhaps it was under the notion of the composite order of Adam originally, that certain heretics, whom Austin combats, believed that women are to be made men at the resurrection.

Adamites, I cannot determine; but in number; March, 1813, p. 34, they agree that *the days of the creation* were periods of *indefinitely long duration*; and they add, this arises *from the discoveries on or beneath the earth's surface*. This I hold to be dangerous; for should we proceed after this rate of interpretation, we shall have at last, as the learned author of the Pursuits of Literature insists, in reply to Geddes, neither miracles nor mysteries. I therefore consider, with the good old theologians, that a day\* of the creation was twenty-four hours; and that in six times twenty-four hours, the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and all that in them is. This is truly divine, evincing mighty expedition,—the promptness of creation is sublime beyond cavilling.—Moses makes his God execute all things in six days.—Mark the superiority of the God of Moses, to the God of the Tyrrheni,† who, instead of six days, required six thousand years to accomplish the same exploit.

“ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the se-

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\* Yet I disclaim *heræsis illa vetusta quæ dixit nomine dierum Solis, Lunæ, Martis, Mercurii, Jovis, Veneris, Saturni, a Deo ita posita ab origine mundi, &c.* Selden de J. N. et G. lib. 3. c. xix. p. 412.

† Suidas, in vocem Tyrrheni.—According to the Parsees, reducing the world to order, required three-hundred and sixty-five days.

venth day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." It has appeared strange to many, that God should express any feeling of fatigue: some have conjectured that this was merely an exalted mode of recommending an interval of remission from labour; and it may be observed, that to the theological motive is added, in Deuteronomy, "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou." Seven was a favourite number with the Hebrews and their god; and with the god of the pagans. Theodorus said,\* that Jove laughed for seven days successively, and for that reason he esteemed the number seven perfect.

God planted a garden and called it Eden, in which he placed Adam, authorizing him to eat of every thing except of the tree of knowledge. Adam then named all the beasts of the field, and all the fowls of the air, and fell asleep. Some have attempted to explain the means by which Adam obtained so fluent and copious a dialect; and a learned orientalist, Sir William Jones, p. 17, supposes that language was breathed into Adam by God; thus then the same effect which

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\* Θεοδωρος τον Δια φησι γεννηδετα επι επτα ημερας ακαπαυσον γελασαι, και δια τουτο τελειος ενομισθη ο εβδομος αριθμος. Photius, Bib. p. 489.

gave life, gave discourse. The excellent South\* says, "Adam came into the world a philosopher;" and a greater name, the author of Oceana, said, "Adam was a gentleman."

When Adam was asleep, God bethought himself that it was not good that man should be alone; he then took out one of Adam's ribs, of which he composed woman. So far the account does not materially differ from the relation in the Edda,† in which it is stated, that the first man and woman were formed of two pieces of wood, found floating on the waters.

Scarcely had this original pair been domiciliated in Eden, till their happiness changed to misery. The serpent, the subtlest beast in the field, accosted Eve, and persuaded her to eat‡ of the tree of knowledge. The colloquy of the serpent has alarmed many. The editor § of Cumberland's Law of Nature says, the Jews give a different account of this, &c. "that Samael rode upon the serpent as big as a camel when he tempted Eve." That Samael, or the devil, should ride on a serpent, is not more unlikely than that the God of the Hebrews should ride on a cherub, which Bishop Louth considers very

\* Sermons, vol. i. p. 53.

† Mallet, North. Antiq., vol. ii. p. 20.

‡ Various excuses have been made for Eve, as that the serpent tempted her just before dinner, during pregnancy, &c.

§ Introduction, &c. p. 17.



grand and sublime: by the bye, in the Universal History we are told, cherubims *were beautiful flying oxen*. Again, Dr. Adam Clark, in his commentary on the third chapter of Genesis, has endeavoured to prove that the temptation of Eve in Eden, was not by a serpent, but by a monkey of the ourang outang species. Yet still the ourang outang does not speak. This difficulty may, however, be overcome with the aid of Josephus, who informs us, that all living creatures, before Adam had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, had the same language; which is supported by the assertion of the divine Plato, who in one of his lunar effusions says, that in Saturn's reign wild beasts\* could discourse together; and of course, with men, who were like them in primeval purity and native ignorance. For my part, I do not believe the tempter was an ourang outang, but a serpent, a talking serpent: if his address did not surprise Eve, why should it startle us; probably the tempter was the amphisbæna, or mysterious double-headed serpent, so prominent a portrait, according to Humboldt, in the hieroglyphical pictures of Mexico.

Eve having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, gave of the fruit to her husband, and he ate thereof, “ then their eyes were opened, and

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\* Αλλα και θηριοις διαλογων δυνασθαι συνηγινεσθαι. Politicus, Opera Omnia, p. 538.

they knew they were naked." Hence we learn the full meaning of "my mind's eye, Horatio." "And they sewed fig leaves, and made themselves aprons," (some read breeches.) God on this became wroth. Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden : he questions them, they acknowledge their transgression. God then curses the serpent, and condemns this gratuitous villain to move prone, "on thy belly shalt thou go;" hence it is clear that the fall of man and of the serpent was contemporary; and it is equally as probable that serpents in Eden moved uprightly, as that men called Himantopades were serpentine\* in their gait. God also commanded, that there should subsist a perpetual enmity between man and the serpent; and the dislike of man to serpents has been reputed a fulfilment of this vindictive prophecy. Had a similar incidental prediction been extended to all venomous reptiles, I believe its verity would have been equally certified. Yet it happens unfortunately, that men have no such raging antipathy to serpents. The motion of this creature is peculiarly beautiful,† and generally admitted to be so. The Hivites adored the serpent. Aris-

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\* "Himantopades loripides quibus serpendo ingredi natura est Plinius." Hist. Nat. lib. 5, c. 8.

† Carcinus said, καλα το οφιν λαβων, &c. on this there is a note, "sic flexuosum instar serpentis scholion vocat." Athenæus, lib. 15, p. 695.



totle\* mentions a sacred-serpent in Thessaly, which was not of the mildest kind. Connor, in his *History of Poland*, (letter vi.) says, that the Lithuanians employ them as penates. Jackson, in his *Account of Morocco*, states, that there is scarcely a house in that country without a household serpent. Bruce† also mentions, that the inhabitants at the source of the Nile, pray to serpents, because they teach them the coming of good and evil; that they domesticate them, and employ them to prophesy, nearly as the Romans used the sacred chickens for the same purpose.

God subjected Eve, on account of her offence, to Adam; and Feyjoo‡ conjectures, that in a state of innocence, man and woman were equal. God also pronounced, “in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.” Browne, in his *Religio Medici*, says, “this is contradicted by whole nations,” which must be admitted to be true. Then God anathematized man and the earth, “cursed is the ground for thy sake;” thus children are directed by nurses to strike chair, table, or floor, when they are hurt by them. God continued to pour forth his vengeance on man: “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.” And thus the greatest curse of the pastoral Tartars

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\* *Opera Omnia*, tom. i. p. 1167. † *Travels*, vol. iv. p. 433.

‡ *Three Essays*, p. 113.

is, " may you live in one place, and work like a Russian !"

After this, " unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and cloathed them. And the Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of US, (who?) to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand and eat of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So drove out the man," &c. Some may think that this was a severe punishment for a first fault; by no means, for the authors of the Encyclopedia Britanica (theology) inform us, " that Adam himself continued 930 years a living monument of the justice and mercy of God: as well as of his love and long suffering towards the sinner." Besides, it is to be remarked, that driving the Adamites out of Eden, and thus separating them from the tree of life, was an act of self-defence of US; for had they eaten of this tree, it appears that they would have become as one of US. And no doubt knowledge makes a great mutation in man, as Aristotle says, " the difference between the learned and the ignorant, is as great as between the living and the dead."

The perniciousness of knowledge to the ease of society and of governors, has been always admitted, and particularly by ecclesiastics, the guardians of the tree of knowledge. And I ask,

when were the clergy more powerful, or more opulent, than at the period when Dr. Forrest, bishop of Dunkeld, said of himself, "I thank God, I have lived well these many years, and never knew the Old or New Testament. I content myself with my pontifical."

When God drove out Adam, "he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Many have inquired where Eden is or was. Every great division of the earth has been honoured by its site. Rudbeck placed it in Lapland; the Ceylonese in Ceylon, (*Percival's Ceylon*, p. 51); but I agree with the conclusive supposition of Mr. Kirwan,\* the chemist, that the spot "on which Paradise stood, seems to have been destroyed by a volcano."

The account continues, stating that Eve had two children, called Cain and Abel, these made their offerings to the Lord, the Lord accepted the offering of Abel, "but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." On this Cain was wroth, and he slew his brother. Thus the first reported ceremony of religion, in the first and only family on earth, caused a brother's murder. God cursed Cain, condemned him to hard labour, that he should be a fugitive and a vagabond. Cain expostulated, complained that the

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\* *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xi.

punishment was intolerable, and that by being a vagabond on the earth “every one (who?) that findeth me shall slay me.” God then *stigmatizes* Cain, “lest any finding him should slay him.”

In the fifth chapter, the genealogy, age, and death of the patriarchs, from Adam to Noah, are related. At this time men lived 800 or 900 years. It appears then, that though far inferior in longevity to the primeval Hindus, who lived 10,000,000\* of years, they were almost as long lived as the first gods of the Egyptians, who, Diodorus Siculus† says, reigned 1200 years. It must be observed also, that Plutarch (Numa, p. 188) would reduce this period, by saying, that the Egyptians counted their months as years. But we must believe that the patriarchs lived many hundred years, for this is marvellous. How lamentably have men declined! We find, as I have stated, that the patriarchs enjoyed a prolonged life of 900 years; yet in the next chapter, God states that man’s days shall be 120 years. Solomon reduces this to 100 (Eccles. xviii. 9), and it is elsewhere related in the sacred volume, that the life of man is threescore and ten. To what shall mankind be reduced?—they shall gradually shrink into ephemeral pigmies. I may observe, that the Egyptian gods also had their lives cur-

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\* Asiatic Researches, vol. ix. p. 313.

† Lib. 1.



tailed, from 1200 years to 300 years. Let it not be supposed, however, that I compare the ethnic tales with the sacred relation in Genesis; for though the Jewish narrative is as extravagant as the accounts of the origin\* and infancy of other nations, it is verity itself; while they are miserable fictions. Diodorus says, the Egyptians honoured the ancient worthies, in order to account for the length of time they said their government existed.

Wickedness multiplied with an encreased population: “the sons† of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and then took them wives, all which they chose.” “There were giants in the earth in those days.” Some might suppose that these mighty creatures descended from the sons of God, and the daughters of men, signified obscurely kings, when church and state were united in the same persons; but this would open a wide and dangerous field of inquiry. There is no doubt of the existence of giants in ancient times. Cleon, the Magnesian, saw a man at Gades five acres long; then why should Pausanias‡ doubt that Tityus covered nine acres in his interment? To be sure, an elephant’s§

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\* Megasthenes, who was the grossest story-teller of antiquity, was startled at the Indian accounts:—*Antiquis Indorum historiis fidem non esse adhibendum*. Strabo, lib. 15, p. 414. What would he have said of the Hebrew?

† See Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. i. c. 3. Spencer de *Legib. Hebreorum*, p. 63.

‡ Page 614, and seq.

§ Sonnini mentions that this happened when he was at Alexandria. *Travels*, vol. i. p. 119.

grinder, even in our days, has been mistaken for a giant's tooth: what then? Yet it is remarkable that Hercules, who appeared in the romantic era of Grecian history, and who performed wonders, was little more than the ordinary height. For though it might be supposed from the expression *ex pede Herculem*, that he was colossal, the Herculean differed from the common foot only as 25 from 24. Britain also in the time of *Faëry*, was troubled with a gigantic brood, who were produced in a manner somewhat corresponding to the scriptural account of the generation of giants:

“ ——— Far inland a salvage nation dwelt,  
 “ Of hideous giants and half beastly men,  
 “ Who companying with fiends and filthy sprites,  
 “ Through vain illusion of their lust unclean,  
 “ ——— brought forth—such dreadful wights.” \*

God repents that he made man, “ and the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.” God orders Noah to make the ark of Gophen wood—he orders him to bring his family into the ark—“ and of every thing of all flesh two of every sort,” with provisions for them.

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\* Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, b. ii. c. 10.—The Scandinavians had their giants, and similarly generated. Mallet, *Hist.* vol. i. b. 89.



The rain continued to fall for forty days, “until the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered,”—“and the mountains were covered;”—yet in the *Ayeen Akberry*, (vol. ii. p. 157,) though an inundation is admitted, it is insisted that the mountains of Cashmeer were not covered. The deluge of Moses partially coincides with that of Ogyges.\* Indeed, Simplicius insisted that Moses adopted the whole tradition in Genesis from the Egyptians: that he took largely from that source is generally admitted. It appears, however, that an Egyptian priest, in the *Timæus* of Plato, tom. iii. p. 23, affirmed, there had happened many deluges; and Nonnus specifies three inundations (*Dionys. lib. iii. v. 137*). Moses, who was inspired, speaks only of one. This aquatic destruction of all things is stated, in the margin of our parliamentary Bibles, to have happened 2349 years before the birth of our Saviour, which has not received the ready assent that it deserves. La Place, a Frenchman of some capacity, says, “plus de deux mille ans avant notre ère l’astronomie était cultivée à la Chine,” (*Exposition du Système du Monde*, tom. ii. p. 267,) that is, within a few centuries of this redoubtable flood. It has been also inferred that the Zodiaks of Dendira were constructed 3800

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\* Cum novem et amplius mensibus diem continua nox inumbrasset. Delos ante omnes terras radiis solis illuminatum, &c. *Polyhistor*, lib. i. c. 17.

years ago, and that those of Esné are more ancient than those of Dendira, by fifteen centuries.

Many have inquired how a ship, about double the size of a first rate, could contain “ of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort,” with provisions for so large a portion of a year. I admit it is hard to conceive, and it must have been effected by some economy in stowage, surpassing the well known exhibition of negroes in a slave-ship on the middle passage. Perhaps Peter’s dream may elucidate this *multum in parvo*: Peter having fallen asleep through hunger “ saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise Peter, and kill and eat.” Acts, x. 11. So said God to Noah after the flood, “ every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you.” Gen. ix. 3.

God’s grant to Noah and his posterity, of this privilege of eating every living thing, seems, however, to have been suggested by the burnt-offerings offered by Noah to God, who “ smelled a sweet savour.” God then *covenanted*\* with

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\* This is a curious covenant:

“ *Sunt superis sua jura; quid ad cœlestia ritus*

“ *Exigere humanos, diversa que fœdera tento.*” Ovid. Metam. 9.

but

Noah and *every living thing*, that he would not again destroy the earth by a deluge. "I set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth; and the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living thing." That is, God gave to the sun and the moon (for there are lunar rainbows) powers and properties that they had not hitherto possessed. This memorial was in fact a new creation. Antonio de Dominis presumed to explain the cause of the rainbow scientifically, for which the clergy had him thrown into prison, where he died, and he deserved it. What has science to do with the miracles of our holy religion?

The eleventh chapter begins "and the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." Then they proposed "to build a city and a town whose top may reach unto heaven;"—and the Lord said, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel."

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but it is still more curious, as God covenants not only with man but with every *living thing*, that he would not destroy the world again by water, while he consigns every living thing to be eaten by man.

Yet in the preceding chapter x. 10.\* it is said, "And the beginning of his (Nimrod's) kingdom was Babel," &c.—and the chapter concludes, "These are the sons of Shem, after their families and their *tongues*, in their lands after their nations. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations in the nations, and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."

I have now conducted the reader to the end of the eleventh chapter of Genesis. Sir W. Jones, in his dissertation on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and Rome, says, "either the first eleven chapters of Genesis (all due allowance being made for a figurative eastern style) are true, or the whole fabric of our national religion is false," in which opinion I perfectly coincide. Let me add, that this revelation concerning Babel, answers many excellent purposes, it accounts for the dispersion of mankind, as we have no experience of a crowded population disposed to change their abode, and plant colonies. It also accounts for the variety of languages, though new languages are perpetually forming. This grand miracle is also explanatory of the venerable Bede's observation; who said the divinity was worshipped in Britain in five different languages; by the Angles, Britons, Picts, Scots, and Latins. (Whitacre's

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\* Patrick, in his Chart of the ten numerals, wishes to consider this chapter as a geographical sketch of ancient Asia.



Manchester, p. 408.) Thus Babel and Christianity entered our favored isle hand in hand together.

A curious account follows, of four kings against five,—of a discourse between God and Abram, and of Abram entertaining three angels. The abundance of rustic fare offered to the celestial guests, induced Dr. Adam Clarke shrewdly to say, “whence we may conclude men were great eaters in those days, and were probably of much larger stature, as well as longer livers than we.” No doubt, but the doctor seems to have overlooked an important circumstance, namely, that the entertainment was prepared for no common angels or men, but for a trinity in unity, “and the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo! three men stood by him; and when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground, and said, my Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight,” &c. Gen. xviii. the sequel is illustrative.

Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed by brimstone and fire sent from heaven. This account, the authors of the *Encyclopedia Britanica* (Scripture) fortify, by saying, it would not be easy to shew why the sea of Sodom is so different from every other sea on the globe. Suppose so, must it follow, because a peculiarity affects a lake, or a sea, or any thing else, that a miraculous rela-



tion respecting its cause should obtain authenticity. Aristotle speaks of a lake in Crete, which emits fetid exhalations; and that the inhabitants affirm Phæton, when struck with a thunderbolt, fell into it (de Mirab. Ausc. Opera, tom. i. p. 1156). This lake is peculiar, yet who credits the fable attached to it. It is remarkable that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is related in the 19th chapter; but five chapters preceding, in the 14th, it is said, “the vale of Siddin was full of slime pits:” and verse 10 continues, “the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there,” which ends with a miracle à l’Irlandaise, “and they that remained fled to the mountains.” This, however, does not conclude the series of wonders; for Lot’s wife, in escaping from the devoted cities, became a pillar of salt. I hope the missionaries will narrowly inspect Calla-baugh, or the salt city, noticed by Elphinstone; I vehemently suspect that the pillar of salt is the primary formation, or core, of this saline excrescence.

I pass over the relation of Lot and his daughters, of which there was, and is, perhaps, a fine painting in the Bishop of Durham’s collection, at his palace at Durham.

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did *tempt* Abraham; and he ordered him to make a burnt-offering of his only son to him:” the sequel I need not relate. Jacob wrestles with God “until the breaking of the day;”

Jacob discovered his antagonist “ by the hollow of his thigh—and Jacob called the name of the place Pennel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

Then we read of Joseph’s reserve towards Potiphar’s wife; and that Joseph interpreteth the dreams of the butler and baker, and of Pharaoh. Joseph advises Pharaoh to provide a discreet minister, and forthwith he appoints Joseph, who with the most loyal providence starved the whole people, till the king became possessed of all their money, and of all their cattle, and finally of all their land. What a trust-worthy minister! what an exemplary prince! “ And as for the people, he removed them to cities from the end of the borders of Egypt, even to the other end thereof.” Machiavel’s prince studied in the same school. Yet the holy text indulges in no jacobinical reflections on Pharaoh. Thus we find the *legitimacy* of kings was omnipotent in this early age. Besides Pharaoh was a pious king, and the lands of the church were reserved from the royal monopoly; “ the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them, whereof they sold not their lands.”

I proceed to Exodus. In this second book of the Pentateuch, we are informed that the children of Israel who came to Egypt were fruitful, and multiplied. This is most certain; for sixty or seventy persons, (Gen. xlv. 27.) though enslaved

and oppressed, did, in no tedious course of time, and in a populous monarchy, multiply to 2,500,000 individuals, a number which now all Egypt scarcely exceeds. But then, says Mr. Atkins, on the authority of the Talmud, eighteen wives were allotted to every ordinary man; and I say, of course, eighteen females were born for each male. No wonder then, that the Hebrews multiplied so fast that the Egyptian king was alarmed. Pharaoh, who was a political economist, wished to apply a preventive check to their productiveness; for this purpose, he tampered with *two* Egyptian midwives, in order that they should destroy the male infants of the Hebrew women. "But the midwives feared the Lord, and did not as the king commanded them."

Moses reaches manhood, kills an Egyptian for maltreating a Hebrew, and flies in consequence. God appears to Moses in a burning bush. "And he said, draw not nigh hither. Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground." Now it appears strange, that Hobbes (on Human Nature, p. 149) having stated among signs of contempt of divine majesty, "to neglect prayer, to speak to him extempore," &c. should account among things indifferent, "to be uncovered, as to put off their shoes as Moses at the fiery bush." For is it not manifest, that this was most important? The Turks continue this prac-

tice, and they require the Christians, on entering a mosque, also to conform to this solemnity. "However," says Hobhouse, "if they grudge this respect to Islamism, they may retain their hats, when they part with their shoes." (*Travels*, p. 966.)

Moses is advised by God to go to Pharaoh, and to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses asks him what he shall say to them when they ask him what is the name of the God that sends him. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me to you." This, which resembles the self-appellation of Ulysses, *nobody*, was not satisfactory to Moses. God then enabled him to work miracles, to change a rod into a serpent, and to infect his arm with leprosy, in order that he might work upon the credulity of the Israelites. Yet still Moses was doubtful of his ability to induce the Jews to believe in him, and he refused to proceed on this embassy, till Aaron the Levite was joined in his commission. In the sixth chapter, I AM reveals himself by the new name of JEHOVAH, which perhaps originated the permission to the elect of being new named at confirmation. Moses then proceeded to Pharaoh.

Moses and Pharaoh's wise men have a trial of skill, when both converted rods into serpents—both changed pools and ponds and rivers into blood—both caused frogs to come on the land of



Egypt. The last miracle of transubstantiating dust into lice, the magicians could not effect. Then the magicians, with candour unusual among theologians, said unto Pharaoh, "this is the finger of God." Yet Pharaoh was obdurate, and disbelieved Moses and Aaron, and the lousy miracle.

Then the Lord sent plague after plague on Egypt. But lest the Hebrews might suffer, he directed them to smear their door-posts with blood, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you"—and he did so—smiting the first-born of men and beasts throughout Egypt. This softened Pharaoh's heart, and the Hebrews were dismissed from Egypt. The Hebrews on this occasion, mindful of God's repeated commands, possessed themselves, under colour of borrowing, whatever they could obtain from the Egyptians. Were not this ordered by God, it would have been robbery under false pretences; and Moses in consequence might have been addressed nearly as an apostle was in the Acts, xxi. 38, by a certain captain—"Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers."

God, anxious for his good people, conducts them, appearing by day a pillar of cloud, and by night a pillar of fire. They pass through the Red Sea, and "the waters are a wall on their right hand, and on their left." Josephus, *Antiq.*



lib. 2. c. 16. reduces this miracle, by comparing it to the Pamphilian sea, admitting the passage of Alexander. Shaw (Travels, p. 313) is deservedly angry with Josephus for this *rational* explanation. Yet Dr. D. Clarke (Travels, p. 325) *supports* the account given in Exodus, by relating, that the sea at Tagarok is so circumstanced, that the people can walk to the opposite shore, a distance of twenty versts, when the wind is in one direction; and that when the wind changes, the sea returns. Hence Dr. D. Clarke may be classed with those mentioned by Browne, “some believe the better for seeing Christ’s sepulchre, and when they have seen the Red-sea, doubt not of the miracle.” Religio Medici, part 1. § 9.

Pharaoh’s host, which pursued the Hebrews, are all drowned; on this Moses sings a song, “the Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name,” &c.—Te Deums are of great antiquity.

The Israelites in the wilderness, lament the flesh-pots of the Egyptians—God sends them quails for supper, and manna for breakfast.—They murmur for drink—Moses smites the rock, and water issues from it. Amalek fights Israel in Rephidim. “And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed, and that when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.” The Lord directs Moses to memorial this in a book, as he intended utterly to put out the remembrance of Amalek under heaven.—To record, and to extinguish the memorial of a person or an event, is truly miraculous.

We are told of the fearful presence of God upon the mount—that neither priest nor people should ascend, except Moses and Aaron, lest the Lord break forth upon them. This achievement ends with thunderings and lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoaking :—thus the parturient mountain is delivered of the commandments.

Moses again ascends the mount, where he remained forty days and forty nights. He then obtains from God, permission to take from “every man, that giveth it freely with his heart,” stuff of various kinds to dress the priest, and erect and furnish a sanctuary, &c.—God is very precise in every particular relative to the ark, and the mercy-seat, and the cherubims ; “And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings,” &c. Yet according to the third commandment, “thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above,” &c. To be sure, as laws do not bind the king, the commandments should not countervail the king of kings. There is also a specification of the table, and the furniture thereof, and of the candlestick, and the instruments thereof: this chapter ends, “and look, that you mark them after their pattern, which was shown you in the mount”—this surely is the original of the mountain in labour.

Some have thought, that these, and the like details, were unworthy of God.—Oh ! no, says

the Christian Advocate, Mr. D'Oily, "thus to interfere minutely in apparently trivial concerns, is not inconsistent with the dignity of so great a being," (p. 47) and this he afterwards calls an *extraordinary providence*. Such minutiae in a theocracy were of the last importance, therefore they occupy three chapters, while the laws are contained in two. Besides the habiliments, ritual, &c. are repeatedly resumed, and in the 30th chapter of Exodus, the Lord having given a recipe for making a holy perfume, ends, "who-soever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people."

In chapter 32, the people oblige Aaron to make them a golden calf. On this, the Lord's rage waxes hot. Moses prays, and the Lord repents. Moses burns the calf, pulverizes it, and makes the children of Israel drink it in water. This was the real presence with a vengeance, yet all dilletanti must pity this calf, which may be termed the Adam and Eve of the statuary department of the fine arts.

The Hebrews for this offence, being first made naked by Aaron, Moses calls on all those to come to him, who are on the Lord's side, that is, who are in opposition to the calf; then all the sons of Levi gather themselves to him, "and he said unto them, thus said the Lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every

man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Israel did as Moses ordered them, and there fell of the people that day, about 3,000." After this excellent service, the Levites of course were appointed to minister to the God of the Hebrews. Moses entered the Tabernacle, "and the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh to a friend." Yet Moses expresses a wish to see God's face, this is denied ; but God says, "thou shalt see my back-parts, but my face shall not be seen."

The last six chapters of Exodus consist in a repetition of theological points. And the first nine chapters of Leviticus indulge in the same sovereign curiosities. The Hebrews must not eat the cony, nor the hare, nor swine ; but they may eat "of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, and have legs above their feet to leap withal upon the ground."

The rebellion of Korah, is ended by the earth absorbing city, men, and all their Gods. A plague destroys 14,700 Israelites for murmuring against Moses and Aaron.

The Levites being substituted for the first-born to minister unto God flourished mightily. "This small tribe of Levi, which was not the fortieth part of the people, as the scripture computes them, had a revenue almost treble to any of the largest tribes," observes Jeremy Taylor, appropriately in his funeral sermon on the



lord primate. Yet the self-complaisant moderation of these Levites, deserves notice; "Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the Lord is his inheritance."

Moses quencheth the burning of Taberah with one prayer, and cureth Miriam's leprosy with another. A man is found gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day, "and the Lord said unto Moses, let the man surely be put to death, and all the congregation stoned him with stones, as the Lord had commanded." An account follows, of the fiery serpents, and of the fiery serpent on the pole, which is to cure the bite of the former, by being looked on by the bitten. This is fascination, and very miraculous.

Aaron's rod ends as it began; being planted, on the morrow "it brought forth buds, and bloom, and blossoms, and yielded almonds." The Glastonbury thorn was probably a sprig from the same tree. All know that the original stock was the staff of a saint.

Israel vows, that if the Lord will deliver the Canaanites into his hand, he will destroy their cities. "And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites, and Israel utterly destroyed them." There is also an edifying chapter, in which Balaam and his ass, and an angel are introduced. The ass was not only clear-sighted, but colloquial, "the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam," &c. I do not mention this as very



imposing, for a cow, according to Dion Cassius, gave good advice, and a horse, in Homer, spoke. To be sure, Harduin (*Apologie d'Homere*, p. 45), denies the resemblance of the horse of Achilles, and Balaam's ass. Balaam was a diviner by profession, he became by easy transition a prophet; he prophesieth of Christ.

The Israelites attack the Midianites, and as the Lord had commanded Moses, they slew all the males. Moses was wroth with the captains for sparing the women, and he ordered them to kill every male among the little ones, and to kill every woman who had known man by lying with him.

In the third chapter of Deuteronomy, there is a relation of the conquest of Og, king of Bashan, "he only remained of the remnant of giants. Behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof." In this book there are two chapters of curses.

Moses grows old, ascends Mount Nebo, and dies; "and there arose not a prophet since Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

I have now taken a cursory view of the chief miracles in the Pentateuch. These books were reputed to have been entirely the composition of Moses. At last it has been admitted that passages, part of the relation of the giant Og, could not have been related by him. But I cannot agree

that the death and burial of Moses were not declared by Moses. Josephus says, that Moses wrote prophetically that he died, lest any one should venture to say, that on account of his extraordinary virtue he ascended to God. *Antiq. lib. iv. c. 8.* This goes far towards proving, that the eulogium on Moses, "he was meek above all men," is no interpolation, but praise by Moses of Moses; indeed, no one would have chosen meekness as the pre-eminent virtue of Moses, but Moses. The bishop of Landaff and others therefore abandoned this passage too easily. Besides, does not Christ call himself meek and lowly of heart. (*Matt. xi.*) It would cause the greatest danger to civilized society and legitimate government, and affect the vital interests of our safety and salvation, if any doubt should be admitted respecting the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and the purity of the text. Besides, if these were not supported at all hazards, the defence of the succeeding books would be a little difficult, even to those who use most freely the license of theologians.

God addresses Joshua, and appoints him successor to Moses; the waters of Jordan are divided. An angel appeareth to Joshua, and tells Joshua that he comes to be a captain of the host of the Lord. The angel also tells Joshua to take off his shoe, for he was on holy ground. Jericho is besieged; the priests blow the trumpets; "the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up

into the city, every man strait before him ; and they took the city, and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword ; and they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein." This destruction resembles an order of Tippoo Sultan, " let every living creature in it, whether man or woman, old or young, child, dog, cat, or any thing else, be put to the sword." (Kirkpatrick, p. 114.) Tippoo wrote a history of his own reign, and intitled it, " The History of the God-gifted Government." Yet extermination, which was ferocious in Tippoo, was divine in Joshua, for it is expressly stated after this sweeping destruction ; " So the Lord was with Joshua."

Five kings war against Gibeon. Joshua rescueth it. God fighteth against them with hail-stones. Timagenes speaks of showers of small-shot, *æneis guttis*, (Strabo, lib. 15), on a similar occasion.

" Then spake Joshua to the Lord, in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel ; and he said in the sight of Israel, sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." This some think would have deranged the universe ; and suppose it had, could not God rectify the disturbance. Some have also said,

the statement supposes that the sun travels, and that the earth is stationary. Yet why should Joshua know more than the king of Siam, who asked the French missionaries, if the sun of India was the same as the sun of Europe. (*Le Compte's Memoirs of China*, p. 487.) I admit that the heresy of Galileo is now orthodoxy, but what then? Why might not the sun in those primeval times have been locomotive; that it was so is probable: the change to its present state was clearly in contemplation when the beginning of the year was changed, (*Exod. xii.*), and this change I conclude was perfected about the time that, in consequence of the prayer of Elias, "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." *James*, v. 17.

Joshua was a great destroyer of kings; it appears (c. 12) that he smote at once thirty-one, with as much ease as in 1815 the royal race of Candy was extinguished by the troops of Britain. Joshua waxes old, exhorts the people, telling them, one man of you shall chase a thousand. What were the heroes of Waterloo to the warriors of the chosen people?

The song of Deborah and Barak follows. Deborah was a prophetess, she judged Israel at that time; this *Te Deum* concludes, "have they not sped, have they not divided the prey, to every man a damsel or two." &c. Geddes reads, "a couple of damsels."

One comes to Gideon, who proves himself to be an angel, by striking fire out of a rock with a



stick. Gideon is encouraged by the dream of the barley cake, and he conquers in consequence.

An angel cometh to Manoah. Who knows him to be an angel; "for it came to pass, when the flame went toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar."

Of Sampson's prowess little need be said, and his dexterity was not less than his strength: "he caught three hundred foxes, and took fire-brands and turned them tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midst, between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with vineyards and olives." He destroyed a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass; lifted up the pillars of a house, and overset thousands; "so the *dead* which he *slew* at his death, were more than they which he slew in his life."

And thrice he routed all his foes,  
And thrice he slew the slain.

From Judges I pass to I. Samuel; in this book, the Lord smiteth the people for looking into the ark, "even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men."

La plus froide fiction  
Marquée au coin sacré de la religion,  
Des sots admirateurs dont la terre foisonne  
Frappe l'imagination.



Samuel's sons disgrace their office, as is customary with hereditary officers. The people in consequence, request a king. Samuel would dissuade them, by telling them *the manner* of a king; that he would force them to serve in his wars, and to minister to his luxury—that he would take the tenth of their seed, and their fields, &c.—for monarchy was not among the idolatries of the Jews. Jotham's parable, the best of all parables, compares a king among his people, to a briar amidst fig-trees and vines, and olives and cedars. The Hebrews were grievously vexed by the judges, and in desperation, the usual motive for adopting monarchy, they demanded a king.

Saul is elected to royalty, being a marvellous tall and proper man. He is anointed, by which God gave him another heart, on which he prophesied; he soon, however, formed a standing-army, which he called a select band, of three thousand men. This original king became jealous of David's exploits; devised means to kill his own son Jonathan, destroyed the priests and witches, finally, "and now in fear, forsaken of God, seeketh a witch." This grandam of Hecate encouraged by Saul, raiseth up Samuel; Saul is overthrown, and his sons slain.

David removes the ark in a new cart. All Israel play before the Lord on all manner of instruments. "David dances before the Lord with all his might." Here I cannot refrain from ob-

serving a want in our established church, which though universally allowed to be the paragon of establishments, does not enjoy either dances or dancing priests, yet the Salii were psalm-singers and figurantes, πάντες οἱ σαλίοι χορεύται τινες εἰσι καὶ ὑμνῆται τῶν ἐνοπλίων θεῶν. (Dion. Halicar. lib. ii. c. 70.) Strabo also speaks of monkeys, who danced on certain sacred days, “ hoc in loco diebus solemnibus simias saltare,” &c. (lib. 13. p. 313.). Shall we then be satisfied in sitting, kneeling, standing, lounging, and lolling? I hope not. I propose, that in addition to the religious societies, another should be established, which should distribute the psalter together with Elliot’s ‘ Governor;’ in which, cap. 22. the author inquires, “ how dancing may be an introduction into the first moral virtue, called prudence.” Let no one say that my proposal is an innovation; are not bows and curtesies authorized in our service, and why should not these in the fulness of time be extended to a complete dance. The Welsh jumpers should of course be ballet-masters, in this cotillon theologique. I presume to some credit for this proposal, yet I fairly admit, that the Osage Indians are not without praise, as they have actually adopted nearly what I here suggest. Pike, in his travels, says of them, “ men and women danced indiscriminately. They were all drest in the gayest manner; each had in his hand a small skin of some description; they frequently ran up, pointed their

skins, and gave a puff with their breath ; when the person blown at, whether man or woman, would fall, and appear to be almost lifeless, or in great agony, but would recover slowly, rise, and join in the dance : this they called their great medicine, or as I understood the word—the dance of religion.” What is the Dance of Death to this ? Does not this in the most lively manner prove the resurrection, of which, by the bye, there might be composed a grand religio-tragic dance. Noah and the deluge might form a minor saltation ; and the whole satyric ceremonial might conclude stupendously, with *the burning of the world*. Fortunately, Athenæus calls a dance precisely by this name, *κοσμος εκπυρωσις*. (Deipnosophist. lib. 14. p. 629.) To return to David, whom we left dancing before the Lord, with all his might.

David having debauched Bathsheba, requires Joab to place her husband, Uriah, in battle, so that he might be slain ; in consequence, Uriah fell. David is called in the sacred word, a man after God’s own heart ; he was an adulterer and a murderer—what then ? David honored the priests, he designed to build a temple ; he was a prophet and a king. They who would detract from David, (“ yet rape and murder are not simple means,”) should remember Secretary Wharton’s remark :

“ Ill reason they, who to the narrow line

“ Of private morals, would a king confine.”

Matters are greatly improved since the days of Israel, now the king can do no wrong. The Daniel of our days talks of adultery in a lord in waiting, as a misfortune; and our priests are as loyal as our judges; there is no Nathan to tell the representative of David, THOU ART THE MAN. Uriah is not now sent to battle to be slain, he with his wife both officiate in the king's chamber.

David and his servants kill four giants, who were born to the giant in Gath, yet we had been told, four or five centuries before, that Og was the last of the giants. These giants destroyed by David were a curious race, they had six fingers and as many toes. Megasthenes speaks of eight-toed men; these were of Og's family, perhaps;—the elder of all things being the more wonderful.

David sings a Te Deum; he numbers the people—this enrages God, who offers him his choice, either of a seven years' famine, or of a plague, for his offence. A pestilence invades Israel, and there died of the people 70,000. David stayeth the plague by building an altar on a threshing floor, and by burnt-offerings.

In I. Kings, we read of king Solomon, “and the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him.” His wisdom is not very obvious in his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines; nor in his idolatry; but he redeemed all by his riches, and by the magnificent temple which



he built. The measurement of this temple is preserved; if we calculate its dimensions by the common cubit, it was 120 feet long, by 30 wide; or if we calculate by the sacred cubit, which was double, St. Paul's church, in London, is twice as long and more than four times as broad. Yet this temple cost, according to Priedeaux's calculation, 1,117,000,000*l.* sterling in gold and silver only. Here is miracle on miracle. This sum expended by the wise Solomon, on comparatively a small temple, was fourteen times more than all the precious metals in circulation in France, when Necker was minister. Borrichius sagaciously attributes Solomon's treasures to the philosopher's stone. I may here remark the marvellous disparity in several calculations concerning the time from the exode to the building of Solomon's temple. In our English \* Bibles it is set down at 480 years, yet Petavius computes it at 520 years, Vossius at 580, Serarius at 680, Vignols at 683, Pezron at 873. This diversity is wonderful, considering the sacred character of the text and the great curiosity of the priests in preserving it.

I shall briefly enumerate a few more miracles in the Old Testament, and pass to the New. Jeroboam is withered by a prophet for his violence, and restored by the same; yet this pro-

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\* Yet, St. Paul, in Acts, xiii. computes from the exode to Saul's death only, 530 years.



phet is outwitted by another prophet. Elijah is fed by ravens. Elijah has a trial of skill with 850 prophets of Baal and prophets of the groves. They cannot roast their ox without fire, which Elijah does.—Elijah twice destroys a captain and fifty men, by fire from heaven.—Elijah goes up in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha has forty and two children torn to pieces by the she-bears, for calling him bald-head. A dead man revives on touching the bones of Elisha.

Isaiah prophesieth, and “it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand. And when they *arose* they were all *dead* men.”—Was this typical or prophetic of the resurrection—surely it was miraculous.

Good king Hezekiah, who was a great benefactor of the priests, prays for prolonged life, and fifteen years are added to his existence. Hezekiah requires a sign from the Lord. Isaiah answers, “the sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken. Shall the shadow (on the dial) go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees.” The good king required the latter, of course it happened. And here mark the power of a Hebrew prophet, who twirls sun or earth as a school-boy does the hands of a penny watch; he moves the earth at the rate of ten degrees in a second, yet the obliquity of the ecliptic cannot be more than

one degree in sixty centuries. This whole account has a parallel in Pagan story, which proves beyond doubt that the Greeks were studious cultivators of the Jewish scriptures. Iolans, according to Euripides, when decrepid by age, became young and strong, in consequence of a prayer (Plutarch Mor. p. 237.); and the rising and setting of the sun were reversed as a sign to Atreus. Socrates, who was a freethinker and a philosopher, treats this as a fable (Plato, Politicus, p. 535).

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream, which he forgot; magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers, are required to shew him his dream; as they cannot satisfy the king's desire, they are condemned to die. Daniel proposes to tell the king his dream: he then prays that God would reveal it to him, which is performed in a night-vision. He then tells the king his dream, "and the same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are thrown into a fiery furnace; these three salamanders, *pro tempore*, become four; they walk out of the furnace, "neither was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire passed on them."

Daniel is cast into the lions' den, but God

sent his angel and shut the lions' mouth, so that they did not hurt him. Thus Tacitus (*Histor. lib. ii. c. 61.*) says, Marcius was thrown to wild beasts, and because he was not destroyed by them, the stupid vulgar believed the impostor. So much for the prophet of the seventy weeks.

Jonah is sent to Nineveh by the Lord, but fleeth to Tarshish; a storm arises—Jonah is thrown overboard by the crew. “Now the Lord had prepared a great fish\* to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights; then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly,” &c.;—“and the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.” We shall find hereafter Christ intimating his own resurrection, by this abdominal residence and expeoration; indeed, this miracle has the power of generating endless wonders. Dr. D. Clarke, in his travels, (*vol. ii. p. 642*) makes Jonah embark at Joppa, for Nineveh, which is some hundred miles distant from any sea.

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\* What fish? probably “a ravenous salt-sea shark,” mentioned by one of Shakspeare's witches.

## CHAP. II.

*Miracles of the New Testament.*

HAVING taken a cursory view of some of the leading miracles, for it would require a volume almost equal to the antiquated tome itself, to display them all, I proceed to the miracles of the New Testament, which are involved by reference and imputation with those of the old, as the Christian religion is intricately confounded with the Mosaic.

Matthew begins, “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” &c. ; and a genealogy is then traced from Abraham “to Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” This genealogy is pursued evidently to connect the descent of Jesus with David ; of whom, in the first verse of Matthew, he is said to be the son, though in a subsequent verse, of the same chapter, it is affirmed that Christ was not Joseph’s son ; now the birth of Jesus Christ was in this wise : when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” Another genealogy is given in Luke of this divine personage, which multiplies and confounds generations and names, as if the relation of Matthew was not sufficiently wonderful and contradictory : I shall



therefore end this most miraculous part of the subject, by saying, as Paul said to Timothy, (Epist. i. 4) “neither give heed to *fables and endless genealogies*, which nourish questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.”

But it may be inquired, for what purpose was this double paternity adopted, which in effect, by multiplying the parentage of Jesus, left Jesus fatherless. Simply because Jesus and his ghostly confederates were persuaded that they had no prospect of being recognized by the Jews, unless they created a lineage for Jesus from David; and as this heritable title was questionable, the miracle of a pregnant virgin was advanced as ancillary to it, which, while it saved Mary’s character, had she been frail, raised her son to the rank of the pagan demi-gods.

Jesus being born, Herod, King of Judea, in consequence of prophecies, fears that Jesus will evict him of his kingdom. A relation follows of the wise men and the star, and the dream, and the passage into Egypt,\* and the murder of the Innocents. When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream; that is, he dreamed a dream, on which he returned with the young child to Israel.

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\* A good deal of this came from Egypt, when Osyris (who preceded Jesus) was born, a voice was heard; saying, that the master saviour of all was come to light, και φωνην αυτω τυχθεντι συνεκπαισιν ως απαντων κυριος εις φως προσεισιν. Plutarch de Isid. et Osyre Moral.



“ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Now *his parents* went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover; and when he was twelve\* years old, they went to Jerusalem.” They returned, and proceeded a whole day’s journey, without noticing that their child, the son of God, was left behind. (For the credit of his parents, this whole story depends on Luke’s report.) They re-return,—“ and it came to pass, that after *three days*, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard him, were astonished at his understanding and answers.” This I do not mention as miraculous, for it is a very subdued relation of precocious talents. Indeed less could not be said, even of a prophet. Zoroaster, whom Hyde (*Hist. Vet. Per.* p. 314) and Prideaux (*Connexions*, vol. i. p. 213) insist, was a servant in a house of one of the Jewish prophets, laughed on the day he was born; and his brain throbbed, which was indicative of his future sagacity. Plinius, *Hist. Nat.* lib. vii. c. 16. Apollonius of Tyana was a prodigy in his youth, even to a proverb, *ποὶ τρεχέις ἐπὶ τὸν ἐφηβον*. (Philostratus *Apol. Vita*, lib. i. c. 9.) After this unsupported

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\* Mrs. Graham saw “ Ganesa incarnate in the person of a boy twelve years old at Chemcore.” He was not disputing with bramins, but attended on by them.

statement of vague ability during three days, when he was opportunely lost, nothing is known of Jesus for many years; and it is generally agreed, that this son of the Holy Ghost lived until about his 30th year, a working carpenter with Joseph. John baptized Christ, “and, lo! the heavens were opened upon him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighted upon him. And, lo! a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” It is odd that *only begotten* was not added, as Plutarch remarks, Homer unites beloved with only begotten son Ομηρος αγαπητον υιον ονομαζει μαινον τηλυγετον. Moral. p. 57.

“Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil; and when he had fasted\* forty days, and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.” To subsist forty days at once without food, is as great a miracle perhaps, as the fasting of Arjoon,† who, by starving himself from four to eight days, and so on, was eventually enabled “to stand immovable on the toe of a single leg, inhaling the air as his only food.”

Into what wilderness was Jesus led to be tempt-

\* Would that the committee for trying Ann Moore of Tisbury, who fasted, she said, for six years, had been in the wilderness. Ann had always the Bible open before her. In the Annual Register for 1763, there are similar accounts.

† Appendix to Graham's India, p. 207.

ed of the devil? On this, theologians are much divided. What devil was his leader? Wier, in his *Monarchie Diabolique*, counts 572 princes of devils, and of the inferior sort many millions; and from their numbers and business in the New Testament, he seems to have underrated them. Jesus being tempted of the devil in the wilderness, and having miraculously resisted, "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple:" he there tries a second temptation, and fails. "And the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him *all* the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." A very high mountain truly, and far superior to Pelion on Ossa, or even Teneriffe on Chimborazo; and observe how absurd those are, who imagine that the earth is spherical; for if so, how could all, or any considerable extent of the kingdoms of the earth be exhibited from one station. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered to him."

Jesus in beginning his ministry, saw some fishermen. "And he saith unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people,"

&c. Thus christianity began, as have most other religions; for prophets have always taken out their diploma for divining, not from Doctors' Commons, but from the college of physicians.

After the sermon Christ cured a leper; in this he was equally favored with the Hebrew priests, who understood the leprosy and its signs and tokens, and also other diseases. (Levit. xiii. and seq.) But it is remarkable, that Christ having cured the leper, desired him, "see thou tell no man," &c. (Matth. viii. 4.) Such a request of secrecy is sometimes craftily made, in order to urge the publication of a tale; and though respecting the sequel, Matthew is silent, Mark states that this was the consequence of the injunction, "but he went out and began to publish it much," &c.; and the same effects followed, repeatedly,\* the same requests of Jesus.

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\* "And their eyes were opened, and Jesus straitly charged them saying, see that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country." Matth. xi. 30, 31.—And again of the dumb men; "but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it." Mark, vii. 36.—Jesus seems to have known human nature well, if he wished to have it published, or ill, if he did not.—Why should he not have it published; he had publicly performed miracles before he evinced such secrecy. Christ however varied his command in this respect, as the person out of whom he cast Legion, he directed: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee;" and Mark, v. 19.



Christ and his disciples go on-board a ship; the storm rages; his disciples are alarmed and awake him, "saying, Lord, save us, we perish; and he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm."

In the country of the Gergesenes, "there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And behold they cried out, saying, what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them, a herd of swine feeding:" in short, Jesus drove the devils out of the men, and the devils by Christ's permission, took refuge in the herd of swine; "and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters;"\* silly pigs, and silly devils! This miracle in Matthew of two men possessed, is only one man in Luke; in the latter, the diabolical confederacy signifies his name; "Legion, for we are many." Luke's account agrees with Mark's; but it is to be noted, that Mark computes the herd of swine at about "two thousand:" this congeries of devils in one body, shews that the schoolmen who comput-

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\* Christ said that, "when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh in dry places;" and Matth. xii. 43, not in this instance.



ed how many angels, or devils, could dance on the point of a needle without jostling, were not so over-curious as some persons, tainted with modern philosophy, sneeringly remark. After this, it would be trifling to ask, why 2,000 pigs were fortunately collected in one place among a pork-hating people; and it is undecided, I believe, who indemnified the swine-keepers for their loss. This is a great miracle, and shews the superiority of a prophet to a sorcerer, or even a sorceress. Circe only transformed men into swine, (Odyssey, lib. x. v. 236) but Christ conjured devils into pigs, and made one submersion drown both.

Christ cures by touching the sick, and by the sick touching him, and by neither touching the other. "Thy faith hath made thee whole." And no doubt, he or she who believes in the sanative power of a miracle, is near convalescence. He feeds a multitude, who sat down by hundreds, and by fifties, with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Yet as if it were not sufficiently miraculous, that these loaves and fishes *filled* 5,000 men; it is superadded, that the residue filled 12 baskets full. Now Elisha only satisfied 100 men with twenty loaves; and if Elisha made iron swim, Jesus out-did this also, as appears by what follows. Jesus despatched his disciples in a ship; in the mean time he went into a mountain to pray; returning to the shore, he perceived the ship had put to sea, as he might have expected, "and he saw them toiling in

rowing, (for the wind was contrary unto them) and about the fourth watch of the night, he cometh unto them walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them." It appears then Jesus went to pray into the mountain, purposely that he might have an opportunity of taking a walk on the sea. Vidar, the 9th God in the *Ed-da*, walks on the sea, and also on the air. (*Mallet, Antiq. vol. ii. p. 60*)

Let no one suppose that I am indisposed to believe this miracle of walking on the sea, (*Camilla* ran dry-foot over the billows) or any other, by referring to parallel exertions. Miracles confessedly were no monopoly of the prophets, and the disciples of the true faith. The sorcerers of Pharaoh performed miracles, so did the prophets of Baal. Apollonius performed miracles, which the holy Fathers of the Church attributed to the assistance of demons. *Vespasian* cured a blind man, and gave another the use of his arm, (*Dion Cassius, lib. lxvi. c. 8*) and on this occasion, the Alexandrians honoured him as a God. In like manner the kings of Scotland so early as 1206, healed the scrofula by the sign of the cross, (*Dalrymple's Annals*) as did our own kings cure thousands of the same disease, which miracles they continued to perform till lately, when the patentee venders of panaceas interfered with the sanative prerogative royal. Does not *Josephus* say that he saw *Eleazar* releasing demoniacs in the presence of

Vespasian and his army: he states the manner of the cure. Eleazar put a ring, with a root resembling the instrument mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the possessed, and with this he drew the demon out of the nostrils. (Josephus, lib. viii. c. 2.) How many published their confidence in the efficacy of Perkins's metallic tractors, and in one list of ten names, five of the subscribers were clergymen.

Miracles were never considered as solely reserved for the teachers of the true religion, they have been used by impostors, by idiots, by priests, regular and dissenting; the catholic church has its exorcists, and Hobhouse says, "there are now in Greece, many *επεργουμενοι*, or possessed, and the exorcising of these unfortunate\* persons is a frequent and profitable employment for the priests." (Travels, p. 528) Wesley believed in visions, dreams, miraculous cures, and providential interference on the most frivolous occasions. Whitfield was equally generous in his faith: he said, "do not condemn me for preaching extempore, or for saying I am helped immediately in that exercise, when thou-

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\* He says, they work themselves into a belief that they are so afflicted. It is a sort of hypochondria; men have thought themselves glass, and they feared to be broken to pieces; others that they were millet, and feared the chickens would pick them up. These caprices and frauds, such as that practised by the reputed Cock Lane ghost, and the boy Bilson, might illustrate the sacred text.

sands can prove as well as myself, that it has been so." As to miracles performed, that is, marvels testified, the Methodist Magazine displays an edifying and alarming series. Thus it appears, that to work miracles, has always been considered a common privilege, because imposture and credulity are general. Gods and devils, angels and imps, prophets and sorcerers, kings and priests, have all been accredited wonder-workers: and for opposite purposes, proving at once truth and reality, and substantiating illusions and nonsense. Yet I of course agree with Paley who asks "now in what way can a revelation be made but by miracles? In no one which we are able to conceive." (Evidences of Christianity, vol. iii.) The divine nature of Christ's ministry, then, was most properly, and could only effectually be proved by miracles. Natural religion is taught by God's laws, manifest to all observing rational men, and conducted with regularity; but Christianity, being a revealed and therefore an unnatural religion, is proved by miracles, which are believed in consequence of that stupendous faith, which not only moves mountains, but which outspreads the globe into one plain, stops the celestial courses, and deprives the elements of their energy, attributes, and being. Though this is agreed, and miracles are divine arguments for the truth of Christ's embassy from God; it is a little perplexing, why Christ should refuse miraculous signs, when they were de-



manded of him ; and why he should refuse a sign to the Pharisees and Sadducees, is still more questionable, saying, “ a *wicked* and *adulterous* generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” Yet *adultery*, on another occasion, was treated by him with the greatest mildness, “ neither do I condemn thee, go thy way, and sin no more,” (John, viii. 11) was his only reproof to a woman caught in adultery. Their *wickedness* also, according to Christ’s own words, should have induced him to have particularly applied the proofs of his mission to affect their belief ; for when the Scribes and Pharisees murmured against him and his disciples for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, he replied, “ they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick : I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

It appears also passing strange, that Jesus should not exercise his miraculous talents in his own country ; the whole passage is curious, “ and when he was come into his own country, he taught them in the synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, whence hath this man this wisdom, and these *mighty works*, is not this the carpenter’s son ? And his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and his sisters, are they not with us ? Whence hath this man all these things ? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, a prophet



is not without honour, save in his own country,\* and in his own house. And he did *not many mighty works* there, because of their unbelief." This seems contradictory, they were astonished at his *mighty works*, yet he did *not many mighty works*. And why not? "Because of their unbelief." Besides, this is the reverse of what might be expected; for as *mighty works* were the inducements of belief, one would conjecture that he should have multiplied them in proportion to the difficulty he encountered in making an impression on their belief. It appears, however, that Christ, as persons were unprejudiced in his favour, circumscribed the mightiness of his exploits; yet this was not his original mode of proceeding, as Jesus did "upbraid the cities wherein *most of his mighty works* were done, because they repented not." Matt. xi. 20.

It is also strange that he was not more enterprising in favour of his countrymen, and those of his own house. Humanly speaking, this does not appear friendly or patriotic. Yet this abstinence of zeal on his own part seems to have been the effect of an inaptitude to believe, not unaccountable on the part of his countrymen. Christ's ministry began by being completely Ju-

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\* Apollonius was. (Philostratus Epistola, p. 396.) So have thousands. Yet it did not succeed with Jesus, and the first miracle recorded in John, of his doing, was his turning water into wine, at the marriage in his own country. ii. 11. vii. 41.

daic; he is prophetically called a governor that shall rule my people Israel (Matt. ii. 6); and when he was sending abroad his apostles, he said to them, "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," (Matt. x. 5). Again, to a woman of Canaan who came to him to cure her daughter, "he answered her not a word, and his disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away, for she crieth after us; but he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me, but he answered and said, it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." (Matt. xv.)

It seems, then, that the original design was Jewish, that the Jews being tried and found incredulous, and unapt to change, they having an established clergy, and creeds, and ordinances, and ceremonies, the Gentiles were resorted to, who had few priests, and no dogmas, and superabundant faith.

That the countrymen and the relations of Jesus were not convinced by Jesus or his miracles, is stated on authority beyond all cavil. (John, xii. 37). They contemned him, as is fully expressed in Mark, "and he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them." (vi. 5.) Such were the opinions of the kindred and countrymen

of Jesus, and of his miracles: feeble indeed was their influence, when Jesus was so surprised at the centurion's belief, that he could not refrain from saying to those that followed, "verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matt. viii. 10.

That some believed, there can be no doubt, he would be unfortunate who should act the wonder-worker, and not have confederates and devotees. Simon Magus bewitched the people of Samaria. (Acts, viii. 8). Alexander, the false prophet, had a very numerous cortege; and Muggleton and Swedenburgh have as many believers as would constitute a numerous church. In England, James Naylor had many believers, and his trial for blasphemy is worthy of being read by all who are curious in the illusions and credulity of mankind; so had Brothers respectable followers; and Southcott counted a host of believers 40,000 strong. Christ of course had his disciples and believers among the Jews, but they were in every respect the most contemptible of mankind. The inventors of the sect of the Nazarenes, afterwards Christians, applied particularly for converts to those burdened with sin. (Matt. x.) They were paltry individuals, such as, according to the Chinese Emperor, the missionaries now attempt to seduce in his empire, "simple peasantry and women." Staunton's Chinese Code, p. 533. Indeed Jesus intimates nearly as much, "I thank thee, father of heaven

and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." (Matt.) "They were wretched in their circumstances, being actually in a great degree supported by charity. (Paul, I. Cor. xvi., *ibid*, Romans, xv.) In short, the first Christian converts suit the character of their modern successors in the east. Sir J. Malcolm says, "the great mass of the Christians in India, are the very dregs of the community." (Polit. Hist. Ind. p. 470.) The progress of this sect or religion among the Jews, was inconsiderable; yet Jesus, as I have stated, regarded at first entirely the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and first and last, he always preferred their interests before all nations. Nor was it till after his putative resurrection that Christianity was proposed for general use; after that it is said, Jesus desired the apostles to preach his name to all nations; yet even then, he superadded, "beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke, xxiv. 47.) Paul also said, that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans, i. 16). Paul did all in his power to win the Jews; he says, "I became to the Jews as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." (I. Corin. ix. 20). It appears, that he had Timotheus, a Greek, circumcised, "because of the Jews, which were in these quarters," who was employed to conciliate these Jews. (Acts, xvi. 3.) All this had little in-



fluence. Paul was opposed by them, and he left them, saying, "from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts, xviii. 6.) And Paul and Barnabas, again repelled by the Jews, declared, "we turn to the Gentiles," that is, the home market being shut, they carried their wares abroad. This opposition to Paul and his associates, does not seem to have been made by the vagabond beggarly class, but by the higher orders. "And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." (Acts, xiii. 50.) Whatever was the cause, the design of Christ and the apostles failed; their pretensions, and miracles, the proofs of a divine mission, had as little effect on the intelligent part of the Jews, as Paul had on the Roman governor, who thought Paul mad; or on the Stoics and Epicureans, who agreed that Paul was a babbler. (Acts, xvii.) But what is still more extraordinary, the miracles performed by Christ, had a very imperfect operation on Christ's disciples. In Luke, chap. v., he likens some of them to dirty bottles, and old clothes; and in John, vi. 66, it is stated, "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him;" that is, there was a defection of his disciples, notwithstanding the miracles he had performed before them.



There are numerous relations of the want of faith in Christ by his disciples. When on board a ship in a storm, Jesus rebuked them, "Oh! ye of little faith." Again, Peter sees Jesus walking on the sea; on this Peter steps out on the water to meet Jesus—"beginning to sink, he cries out, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him; and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt." (Matthew, xiv. 31.) This is told differently in Mark, but the conclusion is the same; their faith was forgetful, "for they (his disciples) considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened." (Mark, vi. 52.)

Again, the disciples had forgotten to take bread. "Then Jesus said unto them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up." (Matt. xvi.) Here were miracles enow to astound the understanding and make his disciples believe: it appears, also, that the miracle of the withered fig-tree was chiefly performed to

confirm their faith. "Behold the fig-tree, which thou cursedst, is withered away. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, have faith in God." (Mark, xi. 21.) Yet still they had not faith; and the miracles performed by Christ continued to make little impression on the memories and conviction of the disciples. Yet I am persuaded, that in this bad age, the many and the few would believe all that any one would assert, if they saw him feeding a famished rabble of thousands, with a few loaves and fishes; and stilling the wind and the waters; and walking on the sea; and curing all manner of diseases; and raising the dead; and driving out talking devils by thousands.

The want of confidence in Christ by his disciples, is also evinced in various ways: one of them, Judas Iscariot, betrayed him to his enemies. Peter denied him, "saying, I know not the man." (Matt. xxvi. 74.) Yet this was that Peter who said to Jesus, "thou art Christ, the son of the living God; and Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my father\* which is in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 16. This was the same Peter, who beheld the trans-

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\* Who revealed this to the devils. Legion accosted "Jesus, thou son of God." So in Mark, i. 24.—iii. 11.—v. 7.—the devils recognized Christ, and denominated him the son of God.

figuration, Matt. xvii. 5, and on whom Christ said I will build my Church, xvi. 18. Their want of faith was only equalled by their want of courage; for it does not appear that any one of Christ's disciples came forward to comfort and console him, or bear witness to him and his doctrine in his distress; "all the disciples forsook him and fled," Matt. xxvi. 56. In this they sink beneath thousands; when Eon del'Etoile declared that he was come to judge the quick and the dead, multitudes, says Mezeray, were infatuated by his pretensions, and many of his disciples chose rather to be burned to death than renounce him.

Thus then we may conclude, that though the miracles attributed to Jesus were stupendous and many, they had little effect on those of his own house and of his own country, and on the Pharisees, and on the Sadducees, and on the philosophers; that they made little impression on the bulk of the Jews, and not much more on his disciples.

Christ was tried, convicted, and crucified; the account of these particulars in the Evangelists are extremely incoherent. In Matthew it is said, "the thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth." xxvii. 44. So in Mark, "and they that were crucified with him reviled." Yet in Luke, "and one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ save thyself and us. But the

other answering, rebuked him, saying, dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou art in the same condemnation."

On his crucifixion it is said, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." This eclipse is not mentioned by other writers, yet there is no doubt of it; and three hours I consider a moderate adumbration for the death of the Son of the God of the Christians, when on the death of the son of another God, Phæton's father withdrew his light for a whole day from the earth, "unum ipse diem sine sole ferunt." "And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." Matt. xxvii. Yet all these things had no more effect on the people in winning their belief in Christ, than the miracles attending the destruction of the Christians in Palestine in the tenth century, had on their Mussulmen persecutors, when "the Bosphorus and the Nile were covered with ice, and earthquakes in Syria and Asia Minor overturned many considerable cities." *Michaud's Crusades.*

Christ being taken from the cross, was placed in a tomb by Joseph, who rolled a great stone to the door and departed. The chief priests and



Pharisees requested that the tomb should be made sure : by the permission of Pilate they had a watch, and they sealed the tomb ; this they did to prevent Christ's disciples from stealing away the body ; and Matthew says, that the chief priests bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples stole him while they slept. Then such a report was in circulation, but of course it was false.

Christ died, " that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death ; that is, the Devil." Paul, Heb. ii. 14. This was a miraculous mode of triumph. Again, Paul says, for this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the living and the dead," Paul, Romans, xiv. 9 : and this was a right imperial reason.

We come now to the notification of Christ not being found in the tomb, which is related with the most candid incongruity by the Evangelists. Matthew mentions two Marys coming to the sepulchre in the morning. Luke intimates that it was the women who came from Galilee, who included, beside others, the two Marys. In John, Mary Magdalene only is mentioned as coming to the sepulchre. The relations are still more discordant in other respects. In Matthew the two Marys come to see the sepulchre, and an earthquake is felt : " for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it : his countenance was like lightning, and his

raiment white as snow." In Mark, the two Marys come to the sepulchre ; " and they said unto themselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre (and when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away) for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment," &c. In Luke, it is said, " and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus ; and it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments." In John, Mary Magdalene only is mentioned as coming to the sepulchre ; seeing the stone taken away from the sepulchre she ran in consternation to Peter and John, and they returned according to their speed to the sepulchre. The disciples enter the sepulchre, who do not see Christ's body. " Then the disciples went away again unto their home, but Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping ; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain." The Bishop of Landaff says, that the last account of one Mary being mentioned, though in the others two are stated to have come to the sepulchre, is no disagreement. And he asks, in his *Apology for the Bible*, " is it an unusual thing to distinguish

by name a principal person going on a visit or an embassy, without mentioning his subordinate attendants." Then Mary Magdalene was the principal person in this visit or embassy, and the other Mary was a person in John's estimation subordinate. Nor is it improbable that the reformed Mary should be honoured as prime in rank, from the well-known greater satisfaction in one repentant sinner over ninety and nine just persons. The other objections the Bishop is equally happy in removing. The incongruous relations of the angel sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, of the angel sitting within the sepulchre, of the two angels standing, of the two angels sitting, one at the head and one at the foot; on these, says the Bishop, and on other minuter objections, I forbear making any more remarks; "all of which are grounded on this mistake, that the angels were seen at one particular time, in one particular place, and by the same individuals." Though I love bishops and an established church, I must flatly deny this; for the mistake, if such it be, is not grounded on supposing that the angels were seen by the same individuals; for one objection is, that they were not seen by the same individuals, and as to the mistake concerning the particular place, and the particular time, the Evangelists are the authors of it. The place is stated by them all to be the sepulchre. The time is also specified by the four, "as it began to dawn," "very early in

the morning," "early when it was yet dark;" and the learned Bishop forgets that he had himself said, in order to refute a feeble objection, "all the evangelists agree as to the day on which they went, and as to the time of the day, it was early in the morning." This confusion and perplexity perhaps were intended to try our faith; and surely, to use Peter's language, they are among *the things hard to be understood*. Yet the Evangelists were inspired, though the necessity of a ghostly infusion, in order to relate matters of fact, is not so obvious. I therefore conclude that there is rather more incongruity in this relation of the Marys, and the morning, and the angels, and the sepulchre, than there is concerning the person and the persons possessed by the legion of two thousand devils.

The Evangelists also relate the preliminaries of the resurrection variously. In Matthew, just after the institution of the holy supper, Christ said to his disciples, as a thing known, "but after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee," xxvi. 32. Yet it is stated in John, xx. 9, subsequent to the opening of the sepulchre, "for as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." How is this reconciled? The intimates of Christ did not know of his resurrection according to John, which according to Matthew he spoke of as perfectly understood; and it was so, if we are to believe Matthew, that the chief priests and Pharisees required a



guard, "lest his disciples should come by night and steal him away, and say he is risen from the dead." What Bishop will apologize for this contradiction?

The Evangelists likewise relate variously Christ's appearance. I shall confine myself to one single character of this variation or difference. In Matthew, Jesus appeared to the two Marys, and to the *eleven* disciples in Galilee, at a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; "and when they saw him they worshipped him, but (observe) *some doubted*." In Mark, "he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he cast seven devils." "Then to two of them as they walked, as they went into the country." "Afterwards he appeared unto the *eleven* as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

In Luke, it does not appear that Jesus manifested himself to the Marys; in this Evangelist Christ first made himself known to the two disciples, but not immediately; he joined them, expounded to them all that the Scripture contained concerning himself: he sat at meat with these two, took bread, blessed it, and gave of it to them. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight." "And they arose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the *eleven* gathered together, and them that were with them." As these

two were relating this event to the *eleven*, "Jesus stood in the midst of them:"—they were affrighted, he asked them why they were troubled, "behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have;" he also eat with them, and continued to command them what they should do; "and it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

In John, Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene, then to the disciples who were assembled within closed doors for fear of the Jews; "but Thomas, one of the *twelve*, called Dydimus, was not with them when Jesus came; the other disciples therefore said to him, we have seen the Lord; and he said unto them, except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Here Thomas is called one of the *twelve*, though they were only *eleven* in Matthew and Luke; but perhaps in the meantime Judas had also risen from the dead, though I must admit this is the only intimation of such an event.

In eight days Christ appeared again to his disciples, and to Thomas with them; "then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side." Two things in passing are here to be remarked: Why did Christ desire Mary,

“touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” John, xxvii. 17. Yet in v. 27 of the same chapter, he desires Thomas to do that which he prohibits Mary from doing, as I have just related. Perhaps in the interval between his discourse to Mary and Thomas he had ascended to his Father, though to mortal sight he remained stationary. I have also to remark, that this reappearance to satisfy Thomas, was an extraordinary favour, and had an extraordinary effect. Yet Christ had said on a former occasion, “if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Luke, xvi. 31. However Thomas and the disciples appear to have been persuaded principally by his resurrection from the dead, which unhappily seems not to have been considered fully sufficient by Christ to conquer their unbelief; for after this he continued to perform miracles, and particularly the miraculous draught of fishes mentioned in John, which Gospel is avowedly supplemental, and according to the chronologists, long subsequent to the Gospels of the other Evangelists. Matthew being written according to them about the year 62; Mark two years later; Luke’s account about the same time; and John’s being posterior to them by twenty or thirty years. This last evangelist, with his brother James, Christ “surnamed Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder.” Mark, iii. 17. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, nor is the cause of his love

mysterious, for the last verse of his Gospel manifests unbounded zeal, expressed with the true prophetic hyperbole; “and there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”

Though John’s Gospel were intended to supply defects in the accounts of the others, and for many reasons might be supposed to be abundantly full, yet neither in him, nor in the other Evangelists, is any numerous estimate afforded of the actual witnesses of Christ’s resurrection; Paul however, as is usual with story-tellers, the last being always the most exact and elaborate, says, “and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of above *five hundred brethren at once*: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles; and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” 1 Corinthians, xv. 4. This account of Paul’s is properly a divine effusion. When did Paul see Christ? Paul heard a voice, \* “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me;” but how did this noise in

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\* Voices from heaven were differently heard, as in John, “the people therefore that stood by and heard it said, that it thundered: others said, an angel spake to him.” xii. 29.



the air become a visible being to a blind man : “ non equidem vidi voleant mendacia vatum te Dea.” v. 253. and Sancho saw his mistress by hearsay. Observe also the progressive testimony of the resurrection by succeeding retailers. In Matthew, Jesus, it is said, appeared to the two Marys, and to the *eleven* disciples, and the numbers accumulated, till Paul multiplied\* the beholders to *five hundred brethren at once*. They however all agree, evangelists and apostles, that Christ appeared to the elect only : “ Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses *chosen before God* even of us.” Acts, x. 40.

Thus it appears that Christ’s resurrection was proved by the most interested in the relation—by confederates embarked in the same project, for whether Christ was seen by one or two, or eleven, or twelve, or five hundred, they were the Mary or the Marys, or his disciples or apostles, or brethren chosen before God—special witnesses truly. Paley admits, that if the evangelists *had asserted the public appearance of Christ in general unqualified terms* it would have been more effectual. But, says he, this proves their

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\* Paul was not scrupulous he says himself. “ To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.” 1 Corinth. ix. 22. In this, he became strong to the strong. From a persecutor, he became a patron—men never apostatize moderately.

candour : (p. 286. Evidences, &c.) indeed they are above all disguise, yet I must disagree with Paley, for I just as firmly believe the re-appearance of Jesus on the credit of his disciples, as if the whole multitude, who were replenished with the loaves and fishes, had been subscribing witnesses to his resurrection and ascent.

Christ conferred on his apostles the power to take up serpents, to cast out devils, to drink without injury any deadly thing, to cure the sick by the imposition of hands, and which the apostles did also confer by the same ceremony on others : he conferred on them also the power to speak with new tongues. It was however on the feast of Pentecost that this last miracle reached its height. “ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the holy ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.” Acts, ii. In short, they addressed immediately, “ Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia ; in Pontus, in Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia ; in Egypt, and in parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and

strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians."

Middleton denied that the apostles had the gift of tongues except as a transitory donation: this enraged many, and well it might. Middleton gives as a reason for denying the permanency of that gift, that "the Greek is utterly barbarous, and abounding with every fault which can possibly deform language." But did not Gregory the Great say: "*non debent verba cœlestis originis subesse regulis Donati.*"

Though I admit the fact related by Middleton, I deny the conclusion; for though not only the Acts of the Apostles, and the subsequent writings in the New Testament, but also the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which were in the fourth century selected out of many candidates for inspiration, exhibit many grammatical errors; yet it has been well said, these are so happily placed as to produce the best effects. Those writings also contain Rabbinisms, Syriacisms, Chaldaisms, Arabisms, Latinisms, &c. which Michaelis has exhibited; all these, instead of weakening, confirm absolutely the enjoyment of the gift of tongues by the disciples; which, so far from being transitory, must have been constant, most constant; as it appears they could not divest themselves, even occasionally, of this prerogative; for when they wrote, they exhibited their manifold ability as linguists, by combining

in infinite confusion many discordant dialects. And here also we may observe a harmonizing incident ; had there been no rout at Babel, there would have been no foreign nation, for all would have lived in one place, therefore missionaries\* would have had no outlet for their zeal ; moreover all those, who have translated the Bible into I believe 42 new dialects for the same purpose, would have been little better than clumsy labourers in their native land. Again, Babel and its confusion have secured us the necessity of a numerous clergy ; for Paley says, in his *Essay on Toleration*, “ the Christian religion requires an order of priesthood, because it is an historical religion founded on facts ; moreover, on the more ancient religion of the Jews ; both which are contained in certain languages,† which have long ceased to be spoken, so that the study of them requires long preparation.” Thus, in fine, Babel and the Christian revelation are so intricately involved in each other, that faith has ample scope for its dominion, and the clergy for their establishments.

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\* These itinerants were common in Israel: “ Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ; for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte ; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves. Matthew, xxiii. 15.

† This is quite moderate, in comparison to another holy work composed by Naniswar, which cannot be fully understood without the knowledge of fifty-six dialects, as so many flowed from the inspired penman. Moore’s *Hindu Pantheon*.



## CHAP. III.

*Prophecies in the Old Testament.*

INTRODUCTORY to a developement of the prophecies, I shall make a few observations on the inviolable authenticity of the sacred volume. Josephus relates, that it was the peculiar province of the prophets and the priests, to commit to writing the annals of the Jewish nation. The advantage of this practice, Christian divines have not failed to notice; and surely it is unfortunate, that in these after-times, any one may undertake the office of historian. With this inordinate license, no wonder that histories have declined from their high tone and exalted character, and that in our own country, the Venerable Bede, and Geoffry of Monmouth, have been succeeded by such writers as Laing and Fox, and Hume.

The priests of Israel were not merely the only authorized relaters of events; they were also the sole depositories of their records. The verity therefore of the Old Testament was secured with the most scrupulous anxiety—nothing could originally be exaggerated or depreciated—nothing afterward altered, expunged, or interpolated. Yet the Annals of Rome were prepared and preserved by the pontiffs, and these documents were not distinguished for their truth or

accuracy. To be sure the sacerdotal order at Rome was not hereditary, while in Israel it was a cast, and reserved for the Levites, the tribe of Moses and Aaron.

Without inquiring how the holy book was unexceptionably conserved during the captivity, when some tribes of the Jews entirely perished, when such mighty alterations occurred in the doctrines of the remnant of that people, and when they even exchanged their native dialect for the Chaldee: without inquiring also how the language of the Jews, varied little from the time of Moses to that of Malachi, a space of a thousand years—(though some have imagined that if the Pentateuch were composed by Moses, there must have been a *rifacimento*, at least as late as Samuel) abandoning all such doubts and inquiries, it is certain, that things are inserted in the Old Testament, which could not have been written at the date under which they appear, for they did not then exist, as in Joshua, x. 13. and in Second Samuel, i. 18. And even supposing that a portion of the wisdom of Solomon was written by the all-sapient king, though I imagine few even of those who are not Latitudinarians, will not admit that c. ii. 12. and seq. belongs to a period subsequent to the date of its reputed publication.

With regard to the gospels, equal or greater difficulties occur. Supposing that the four gospels, which were selected from many, were just-

ly chosen, what is the security of their authenticity in the meanest use of that expression? In what language did Jesus speak? not in Greek. When were the gospels written? not for many years after Christ's death. Who composed the gospels? suppose that they were composed by those whose names are prefixed to them, who wrote them? the evangelists probably could not write,—the gift of tongues included no donation of penmanship. Suppose them written by the evangelists, who preserved them afterwards?—Certainly no sleepless guardians of the truth. There is an interpolation in John to serve the purpose of the mysteries of the Trinity, which is not less gross than the fore-mentioned one in Solomon, relative to the crucifixion; and it has been abandoned by Griesbach—Porson—the Bishop of Lincoln, &c.; the whole passage in Acts, xix. from v. 11 to 20, is also discredited; let these suffice at present to alarm the confident, and moderate the dogmatic. Nor was the spirit of fraud confined to the falsification of the Old and New Testaments; the Fathers of the church, who announced the propriety of pious frauds, or their friends, corrupted the text of Josephus *clumsily*, says Warburton, to make this Jew testify for Christ. The English clergy also falsified again and again the rolls of parliament to serve their own dominion. All these, Levites, early Christians, Fathers of the Church, bishops of the establishment, were followed by the *Congregation of the*

Lord; “who took care,” says Hume, to “publish only the articles favourable to themselves; and they were guilty of another imposture, in adding one to the number,” &c. (Hist. England, vol. v. p. 31.) I now proceed to the prophecies, which will elucidate some of the foregoing observations.

Ham having seen the nakedness of his father, is cursed by Noah:—“cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren!” Why should any of Ham’s children be cursed on this occasion?—but why Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, should be cursed, and not his elder brothers, is most curious. This execration then was descendable after the manner of *borough English*. Some indeed have reputed this curse to be a theological necessity, to instigate the Jews to conquer the land of Canaan, and enslave its inhabitants. This would approximate the iniquitous prophecy to reason, and therefore it is inadmissible. It is also said, “And Abraham passed through the land into the place of Sichem, unto the plains of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land; and the Lord appeared unto Abraham and said, unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.” (Gen. xii.) Yet the Canaanite was not then in the land, nor will any one of any intelligence support the affirmative.

This execrable prophecy is therefore impeach-



able even by the most believing, yet happily predictions enow remain, even to excess, for all divine and human purposes. A little fancy to be sure is necessary to perceive their completion. This is expected at all times, for prophecies being inspired, are adapted only to the cognizance of the least mundane of man's faculties. Beside the usual exertion of fancy, in order to perceive the coincidence between a prophecy and its fulfilment; something more is required to detect the completion of a Hebrew prophecy; for a pious author said, "the truth is, the laws of methodical composition and arrangement, were neither known by the Hebrews, nor regarded by them in their didactic writing." Of course, in their prophetic intimations, they must have indulged in all the license of superlative disorder. But this looseness in their use of terms, and derangement in their collocation, were pregnant with many excellent effects; for by these means a prophecy had many chances of being successful; typically or literally, or fantastically, or by transition or reference; besides, a prophecy having served to help the wants of the Old Testament, it was considered as equally adapted to serve the necessities of the New. Yet with all this extraordinary aptitude to profit by all occasions, a sort of difficulty attends some prophecies, which I trust the wise men of our Holy Church will illustrate; for instance—

The saviour of the Jews was to be propheti-

cally a descendant of David, which he was not, but the son of the Holy Ghost, or of some other, for Mary was pregnant before she was married to Joseph, who was, it is said, of the stock of David. Had the Sages given Jesus a double paternity; this, with deference, would have satisfied many doubts. If however the prophecy of Christ's descent from David confessedly failed, another prophecy was most miraculously accomplished in his person; a prophecy, observe, which had been fulfilled centuries before, was revived and was employed as a sacred anticipation of Mary and her Son. It is as follows: Isaiah proposed to give a sign to Ahaz in the following words: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel; butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." This prophecy in a short time was accomplished. "And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son." (c. viii. v. 2, 3.) That the prophet Isaiah, who performed such wonders for good king Hezekiah, should get a virgin prophetess with child, is not unintelligible; but that this sign should be applied in 7 or 800 years after its completion, as a prophecy respecting Mary, the wife of Joseph,

and her son, is not less miraculous than the prophetic descent of Jesus from David; from whom, as I have said, Jesus confessedly was not descended. Yet the incredulous Jews neither believed that Jesus was the son of David, nor that a prophecy, accomplished by Isaiah's maiden, was re-accomplished by Mary, Joseph's wife. In short they could perceive no similarity between Christ and their promised redeemer; they expected a temporal prince, for their views were temporal, and Moses and his followers taught them none other. All predictions led to this prepossession. "And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them," &c. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and judgment on earth." (Jeremiah, xxiii.) Now Jesus was no more a king than he was a descendant of David, nor is there any semblance of royalty in his life or adventures, if we omit his ordering his disciples to bring him another man's ass, and his riding on it into Jerusalem in a sort of triumph. The passage just quoted from Jeremiah has much less connexion with Jesus than Hannah's song, though this is not prophetically announced, "the Lord raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes." (1. Sam. 8.)

All the Jews expected, and indeed if the language of prophets did not enjoy a divine latitude,\* none but a temporal prince could satisfy their just anticipations; in Jeremiah it is said, "in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely." The disciples expected a temporal Redeemer also: "but we trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," Luke, xxiv. 21. And afterwards they asked him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel," Acts, i. 6. When I say the Jews could expect none but a temporal prince, let it not be supposed that I think they should not be persecuted for understanding language in its only intelligible import; for they should have known that time meant eternity, and that real liberty and self-government signified the triumph of the cross, and a metaphysical redemption. But observe how ably the ethereal interpreters, having ascended the empyrean, dropped from heaven to earth; as Rousseau says, "those humble Christians soon altered their language, and quickly was seen this pretended kingdom of another world, under an invisible sovereign, become the most violent despotism in this." *Social Contract*, liv. iv. c. 8.

Nor did the sequel encourage the Jews to embrace Christianity. The Jews believed that they

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\* "Among the Satræ," says Herodotus, "the priestess responds, as at Delphi, and with the same ambiguity." lib. vii. c. 3.



had received their laws and ordinances from God himself; and in the Old Testament it is declared repeatedly, “ye shall not add to the word which I command you, nor diminish aught from it.” Deut. xlii. *ibid*, xii. 32. Now who should authorize them to alter their laws, they believing that these came specially from God? not the son of David, nor the son of the Holy Ghost, if they had heard of the story of *Deus et Virgo*; but the Christians did alter them. The Jews believed that circumcision was instituted by God, Gen. xvii. which God also enforced after the Exode. Joshua, v. Yet Paul said, 1 Corinthians, vii. “circumcision is nothing.” Paul also treats contemptuously the law of Moses; “and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Acts, xiii. In the following passage Paul is still more supercilious, “wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Gal. iii. The Jews did not believe in Christ, nor could they believe in him, and not renounce the law of Moses delivered by God; yet are they justly persecuted.

Having noticed the blindness of the Jews, I shall now signify the keen perception of an apostle. Peter, with the utmost facility, applies God’s language in the Old Testament concerning the Jews—a *chosen people*, a *peculiar people*, to the Christians. 1 Peter, ii. 9. And as a hint is never

lost on the present generation of theologians, the Song of Solomon is construed as God's love to the Christian church; for, says the Christian advocate Mr. D'Oyly, p. 59, "it is held, in its primary sense, to mean a real marriage of Solomon with his bride, and the Rabbins themselves understand it to bear an allegorical sense—the union of God and his peculiar people;" therefore he concludes it may be applied to the Christian church. Of course; and I have provided conscientious disputants with Peter's authority for this right of transfer. But I would ask the Christian advocate, for which of Solomon's seven hundred brides was this song composed? Of the three hundred ladies of the outward chamber, I speak not; or was it a sort of state epithalamium for each and every one of the thousand. A thought occurs to me; perhaps Solomon was a monogamist, and that the seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines merely represent the orthodoxies\* and heterodoxies of the Christian church.

With the same licentious transfer, the denunciation of Moses against the Jews, should they disobey the ordinances of God: "the Lord shall scatter† thee among all people, from one end of

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\* I do not refer, I assure the reader, to the clergyman's pun, orthodoxy is my own doxy, heterodoxy another man's doxy; far be from me any disposition to treat matters of the last importance with levity: I may differ from learned and pious men, but I would comport myself with gravity.

† The coincidence between the Jews and Armenians is strik-

the earth to the other ; thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead you :” is repeatedly announced as a prophecy now accomplishing on the Jews, because they reject the Gospel of Christ ; that is, the same monitory curses are applied against the same people, should they swerve from the laws of God declared by Moses, and because they abide by those laws. Besides, this prophetic execration, which is transferred to existing circumstances, had been already fulfilled on the Hebrews, because they had abandoned the laws delivered by Moses ; “ for they obeyed not thy commandments : and wherefore thou hast delivered us for a spoil, and unto captivity, and unto death, and for a proverb of reproach to all the nations among whom we are dispersed.” Tobit, iii. 4. Here is another special instance of the resurrection of a prophecy, which having perished, by its completion during the first dispensation under Moses, is raised from the dead

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ing. They were both agriculturists in their native seats. They are now the reverse. Hobhouse also speaks of the Armenians, “ from the time of their forced emigration they substituted commerce for agriculture. They are now, no less than the Jews, a dispersed people, living in strange lands, and in Turkey ; notwithstanding their numbers, they may be considered rather a sect than a nation.” *Travels*, p. 894. “ Their minds display no other activity than what is sufficient to assist them in the pursuit of one only object, the attainment of wealth,” p. 895. “ The chief Armenians of Constantinople are, as well as the Jews, money-brokers,” p. 899.

in order to prove the verity of the second dispensation or *curæ secundæ* of heaven under Jesus. It is observable, that part of this prophecy was more applicable to its original than to its substituted purpose; it is said, “ ye shall be few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude.” Deut. xxviii. In their former dispersion they were few, but it is questionable, if even in Solomon’s reign, the Jews were more numerous than they are at present.

I pass over other prophecies which enjoy the same ambo-dexter ability in supporting the weakness of the Old Testament, and leading the blindness of the New; many other curious and recondite applications of past sayings to present circumstances I also omit; as where Jeremiah, under the type of a potter’s vessel, foresheweth the desolation of the Jews; for in truth the *farrago libelli*, which the Christian church has annotated and applied eternally for its own purposes, exceeds the monstrous ingenuity of the transmuting doctor in Ben Jonson’s *Alchemist*, who referred every fable of pagan mythology to his philosopher’s stone :

Both this th’ Hesperian gardens, Cadmus’ story,  
Jove’s shower, the boon of Midas, Argus’ eyes,  
All abstract riddles of our stone.

This is no extravagant illustration of the zeal and curiosity of the true friends of Christianity : prophecies have, as I have related, been pressed



from the service of Judaism to become handmaids to Christianity, and ethnic tales have been marvellously obliged to minister to the empire of the true faith. The Sybils have not been forgotten among the auxiliaries, and in the Sistine gallery of the Vatican they hold a distinguished place among the Hebrew prophets. I shall now proceed to display two prophecies of the New Testament.

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## CHAP. IV.

### *Prophecies of the New Testament.*

NO prophecy is more relied on than that of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem. Let the reader consult the several chapters in the Evangelists respecting this event. How far the signs there given announce that catastrophe, must depend on the susceptibility, or rather, the dropsical thirst of his belief. To say that a city shall be trodden down, and that a temple shall not have one stone left on another, is not so very peculiar; for many cities and temples have been overturned in ancient and modern times.

It is assumed, and indeed it is expressly stated, that a prophecy accomplished is proof of divine influence; "when a prophecy is fulfilled, it af-

fords complete evidence that he who uttered it spoke by the spirit of God." (*Encyclopædia Britan. Prophecy.*) If so, how many prophetic chairs may the world boast in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The Hebrews believed in prophetic raptures, which their God did not excite; so did the early Christians; so did the Fathers of the Church; and Dr. Collyer now, with many others, can only account for the truth of some such predictions, by attributing them to the instrumentality of demons. That prophecies have been accomplished, there is no doubt. I shall state a few of them:—Col. Wilkes, (*Sketches, &c.*) says, that in 1626, by the birth of Sevajee, a prophecy was accomplished, for he became both a conqueror and a deliverer of the Hindus.

Polwhele, in his history of Cornwall, writes, "in the parish of Paul, on the sea-shore, is a rock, called in Cornish Merlyn-car, or Merlin's rock. On this is foretold in Cornish the destruction of Paul's church, Penzance, and New Lyn, long before they were in existence;" and this prophecy was accomplished in 1595.

Sir John Davies mentions a prophecy by the same person, which had also been noticed by Giraldus, respecting Ireland: "*Sextus mœnia Hiberniæ subvertet, et regiones in regnum redigentur;*" "which" says Davies, "is performed in the time of James the Sixth." (*Discoveries, &c.* p. 77.) Here we have prophecies of the destruction of a temple; of the redeemer of a

people; and of the subversion of a nation : all which were accomplished, according to the sincerity of the expressions in which they were declared. Now, suppose the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the temple, preceded their ruin, as certainly as the prophecies did the events which I have just recited, were they merely human, and is it divine ?

But there is also something very wonderful attached to the destruction of the temple, for it is said, it was attempted to be rebuilt by the apostate Julian, and he did not build it. Yet I find nothing stated prophetically, that the temple should not be rebuilt. But a miracle forsooth was displayed, when Julian's workmen proceeded to clear the foundations. Indeed, Marcellinus relates, that globes of fire broke forth, and drove away the labourers. Did Marcellinus see this ? No. Then this miracle rests on the hearsay relation of a half-learned soldier. And mark the marvellous accompaniments, " that crosses were impressed on the persons of many beholders," &c. In the ecclesiastical account of this wonder, globes of fire are always mentioned, but the tattooing by crosses is uniformly omitted, as far as I recollect.

Let me also ask, do the believers in Marcellinus, on this occasion, concur in all the marvellous relations of Marcellinus ? Do they believe the prodigies related by the principal historians of Greece and Rome ? Do they not believe that

the destruction of Jerusalem by Alexander Severus was foretold, by wolves and hyænas entering and howling in the cities; because Dion Cassius, lib. lxi. chap. 14, avers the fact? Do they subscribe to the account by the same historian, that it was foretold Vespasian should be emperor, because an ox curtsied to him. (lib. lxi. chap. 1.) To be sure, Ziphilin, (p. 41) the epitomizer of Dion Cassius, condemns him for such relations, stating, he should rather have followed the example of Polybius, who never relates the miracles said to have preceded the destruction of cities.

Now, is it not just as probable, that Julian, if he had actually proposed to rebuild the temple, had been diverted from this design by ordinary concerns, as by celestial causes; and that various and encreasing business, an exhausted treasury, a mighty war, which suspended all other designs, and in which he lost his life, did rather induce him and the Jews to forego this project, than that God played off a volcano on the workmen. It appears, also, that many hundred years before Julian existed, Cyrus proposed to rebuild the Jewish temple, for it had been more than once destroyed; and that Artaxerxes forbid the undertaking. It was prohibited by him, because he was informed, “that the Jews were always rebellious, and raised always wars therein: for the which cause, even this city was made desolate. And the building of the temple in Jerusalem ceased



until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of the Persians." (I. Esdras, ii. 23, 30.) But none of these considerations could, forsooth, have any effect on Julian. And we are to conclude, that neither the unpropitious and repulsive character of the Jews, when fully considered, nor the pressure of public affairs, and the jeopardy of the empire, could relax or procrastinate the tremendous design, but that a pyrotechnical miracle discomfited this impetuous, projecting, and short-lived emperor.

I have exhibited some of the prophecies on which our holy religion is founded, and I have shewn the marvellous ability of our theologians, in making events consort with predictions, and further, in making predictions, which had anticipated one event, intimate by a sort of foreboding *passover*, another event in wholly different circumstances; and lastly, in making the non-performance of a design create a prophecy, and secure its fulfilment. Indeed, the decipherers of prophecies among us are only inferior to the throng of prophets in Israel, when they appeared in regiments eight or nine hundred strong; for it must be allowed, that if Israel enjoyed the prerogative of originating prophecies, Great Britain claims pre-eminence for discovering their completion. John Hawkins, Esq., proves, that Britain is the kingdom which Daniel declares God will set up. Captain John Maitland illustrates the prophecies of Daniel by Revelations.

J. H. Frere, Esq., proves, that the prophecies of Daniel, Esdras, and St. John, have been accomplished in the life of Bonaparte: and the ex-king of Sweden pronounces Bonaparte to be the beast in the Revelation. Mr. Faber engages in wholesale discoveries of this kind; while his friend, Mr. Burt, helps him in the retail trade, saying, "that present appearances give considerable weight to Dr. Faber's supposition of the battle of Armageddon in the Holy Land." And thus an Irish legislator, when alienated in his mind, insisted that Armageddon meant Armagh, because in the Apocalyptic vision, something is incidentally said of its *fine linen*. Yet these writers, and a hundred more, appear to be outdone by Sir W. Jones, who, Lord Teignmouth says, founded his belief on Isaiah; quoting particularly, "who was put to death and complained not." (Life of Sir W. Jones, p. 82.) Then the ejaculation, "my God, why hast thou forsaken me," is not plaintive. Let me not, however, be understood as giving undisputed pre-eminence to the ingenuity and zeal of the Christians of the present day beyond all their predecessors; never let it be forgotten, that in the last age, Whiston, a clergyman and mathematical professor at Cambridge, considered, that Mary Toft's having, according to popular belief, brought forth rabbits, was an accomplishment of a prophecy in Esdras.

With this complaisance to prophecy, and this

dexterity of teachers in all ages, it would be strange should any prophecy be baulked of success. And yet there is one which some, nay many, continue to say has not been fulfilled; namely, the end of the world. The near approach of this consummation seems to have been the grand theme of all apostles, prophets, and priests, from John the Baptist to the present Rev. Mr. Proby. "In those days, came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. ii. 3. The same alarm was repeated by Jesus: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God: and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the Gospel." Mark, i. 14. What means "at hand," which has been extended beyond the indefinite days of the creation. Peter has been quoted for this purpose; but "beloved, be not ignorant of this, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand\* years as one day." 2 Peter, iii. 8. If so, even without employing this inordinate abuse of language, the Sybil's prophecy was accomplished: she predicted the destruction of the world, which however was divinely explained to signify the violent death of

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\* This transcends the latitude required by the composers of the enigmatical verses mentioned by Plutarch, *γῆρας* stands for a year in them. Moral. &c. p. 186.

a person, whose name was Mundus. Procopius de Bel. Gothico, lib. i. c. 7. We are however not now speaking of a day, or of a thousand years, but of "at hand," about one thousand eight hundred years after this expression had been significantly employed; nor have we any concern at present, how one day, or one thousand years, may be short or long to God, but how "at hand," and similar expressions, are intelligible to man.

"At hand" was used by the persons mentioned, in the ordinary acceptation of these terms, "Know ye that the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand: verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." Luke, xi. Again: "Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done." Mark, xiii.; and Matthew, xxiv. uses the same words. This Evangelist also says, "for the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, there are some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." xvi. "At hand" is evidently limited to a short period, and is even circumscribed to the existing generation. Jesus, as if to impress his disciples with the urgency of his coming, addressed them: "but when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of



Israel till the Son of mankind\* be come." Matth. x. The disciples also taught that "the end of all things was at hand." 1 Peter, iv. 7. The Fathers of the Christian Church re-echoed the same expectation, and their sons, even their infant progeny of the present day, in the same spirit, impatiently pray to God to "hasten thy kingdom." Burial Service.

This prophecy is not fulfilled. What then? It is a divine inspiration and not less convincing than other prophecies fantastically enunciated and fulfilled by prevarication. Christ gives an excellent standard for discovering an orthodox prophet; "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, ye shall know them by their fruits." Matt. vii. 15. Now the fruits of this prophecy by Jesus and his disciples, and by the Fathers of the Church and their spiritual children, are the spread of the Christian religion, and, above all, of religious establishments; both which have given the clergy a mastery over the fortunes and the minds of men. Therefore excellent and lively is Peter's figurative intimation of the kingdom of heaven being "at hand;" *but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.* 2 Peter, iii. 10.

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\* This also shews how completely Judaic their mission was.

## CHAP. V.

*Mysteries.*

THE mysteries of our holy religion are many and imposing, and that respecting the atonement is truly a concatenated series of the most occult and stupifying wonders. One man made, we know not how, and his rib fashioned into a woman, are placed in a garden. A serpent prevails on the woman to eat of the forbidden tree, and the woman induces Adam to transgress with her. For this first offence by this inexperienced pair, God pronounces heavy imprecations on them, and exiles them from Eden. To this Jewish account of the entrance of sin into the world, the Christians attach a fantastic pollution, which is to be purified by a vicarious sacrifice ; and certainly it is most becoming, that those who sinned at the beginning of time by representation, should be redeemed from sin, by substitution at the end of it.

In this mystery, God's curse on the serpent—" his seed shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," is applied by Christians to signify mystically, that Christ shall defeat Satan's attempts ; though a simple solution might be as near the truth, namely, that the serpent's head bruised should be used to heal wounds inflicted

by the serpent, which application has been actually practised in such cases :

“ Quum nocuit serpens, fertur caput illius apte

“ Vulneribus jungi : sanat quem sauciat ipse.”\*

Serpents have also been used medicinally in Egypt, for the Elephanthiasis, according to Aretæus.† This however would be too easy an illustration : and thus in the fulness of time, a man becomes I know not what, who is not of the seed of man, and the serpent becomes the devil ; that mystagogues for the noblest purposes, may outrage language, and facts, and fancy.

The offence of Adam and Eve, and through them of all mankind, being stupendous, could only be expiated by an event equally astonishing, namely, the murder of God’s self, or God’s only son, to satisfy God’s sacred vengeance. To prepare this catholic remedy, the Holy Ghost was employed as a generative mediator between God and woman, to produce an expiatory mediator between God and man. How this spiritual incarnation was effected, has perplexed many. A Father of the Church said : “ Deus‡ loquebatur per suum angelum, et virgo per aurem impreg-

\* Lerenus De Medicina.

† Curat. &c. (lib. ii. c. 13). The Chinese, Javanese, Hot-tentots, use them medicinally. (Barrow’s China, p. 348.)

‡ I would not be surprized, if the author of *Tartuffe* alluded to this in his *Malade Imaginaire*—si l’on fait des enfans par Poreille.

nabatur." I marvel that this mode of angelic cohabitation has not been made an article of our holy belief; for as Eve lost mankind his happy state by listening to the serpent, it is most fitting that the redemption of mankind should be introduced by the sense of hearing. Yet how brought the virgin forth? Aristotle says that weazles generate by the ear, *De Animalibus* (lib. iii. c. 12); and Plutarch adds, they bring forth by the mouth. (*Moral.* p. 279). I do not say that Mary was impregnated by the ear, and became a mother by her mouth; but I say this suggestion should not be hastily rejected.

At all events a son was produced by a virgin, and the Godhead, "*sic Deus et virgo*,"—as had happened according to Isaiah, as had happened according to Dion of Halicarnassus; (lib. ii. c. 48) as had happened according to Spenser:

———— Men say he (Merlin) was not the son  
Of mortal sire, or other living wight,  
But marvellously begotten, and begun,  
On a fair lady nun. *Faery Queen*, b. iii. c. 3.

This son of the God of the Christians, reached the completion of his ministry, and was murdered to redeem all mankind from the sin committed by Adam and Eve. This sacrifice of God's only Son to satisfy God's just indignation, evinces, we are told, most super-human philanthropy in God. And it is stated, as some preparation was necessary to introduce so benefi-



cial and superlative a mystery, that Abraham's prompt obedience, when God tempted him to sacrifice his son, was a divine rehearsal of this paternal achievement by the God of the Christians; however it may be questioned if Jephtha's *rash vow* would not be more in point, though I must admit that, "a ram caught in a thicket by the horns," has a striking resemblance to Christ crucified. Madame de Stael, that great theologian and moralist, has advanced beyond these typifiers; she considers the murder of Abel the basis of Christ's death. (Germany, vol. iii. p. 308).

Such ingenious readings of types and symbols, and anticipations, have shocked a few of weak nerves, yet why should they wince? Has not the Rev. Dr. Magee, in his admirable work on the Atonement, collected infinite notices of sanguinary barbarians, sacrificing beasts and captives, and wretches of all kinds, in order to assure the reasonableness of the atonement. Whether the learned theologian has enumerated in his detail, Saturn's devouring his children according to some, or, according to Sanchoniathon, his offering up his son as a holocaust to redeem the people from a plague; I cannot say, though I read his argument with great admiration. Yet I own I am amazed that Madame de Stael, and Dr. Magee, and the like devotees of this son-slaying humanity and vengeance, did not rather rest the merit of the atonement on the sacrifices of the Jews to Moloch. The assassination and mas-

sacres which they refer to, are at most, merely murders without aggravation in honour of God ; but the votive offerings to Moloch were the slaughter of children by their parents, not, I must admit, to gratify parents' vengeance, but parents' superstition.

This sanguinary satisfaction to the author of all goodness is very edifying and truly mysterious, yet it is not so peculiar as Gibbon imagined, who said irreverently of this fundamental dogma of Christianity, that he knew only of one religion which made the same the God and the sacrifice. This writer's learning was on this occasion overpowered by his philosophy. Did he forget the beginning and the end of Apis? This God was conceived by the Holy Ghost—"divinitus et cœlesti igne conceptus." Mela, de Situ Orbis. (lib. i. c. 9.) And this God Apis always suffered a violent death: "the priests," says Pliny, "do not permit him to die, they drown him."

Though the atonement be so imposing a mystery, yet some have questioned its equity. "The people of Nicobar," says the Danish Missionary, Haensel, "laughed at us; they observed that they could not believe that the sufferings of one man could atone for the sins of another; and therefore, if they were wicked what we told them of a crucified saviour would not help them; but they insisted they were good by nature, and never did any wrong, as we well knew." The ignorance of these unbelieving

people was so great, that not only they were not conscious of original sin, but their acquaintance with the atonement was so imperfect, that they imagined the atonement was to redeem the people from sins which they had committed, and not from sins which they could not by possibility have committed.

It might be asked what obvious alteration has been effected by the atonement in alleviating the curses vented by the God of the Jews and Christians on man, and on the earth, in consequence of Adam's transgression? The pains of childbirth are not mitigated; the land produces thistles and thorns; tillage continues to be op-rose; man is dust, and returns his mouldering frame to the earth. True: but the atonement, it is said, has restored mankind to a reversionary prospect of life hereafter. If so, the Jews who died prior to the Babylonish captivity, will obtain what they never expected either in dream or vision, even amidst their most fantastic expectations. The Jews prior to that epoch, were ignorant of a resurrection, indeed so unacquainted were they with that mystery, that when they shall be recalled into being, it will require some ingenuity in the ministering angels to persuade them of their identity. It is also remarkable, that while the atonement redeems us, it does not redeem us; for we are told, "two things are necessary to salvation, baptism and the supper of the Lord." Then the atonement is rather a re-

prieve than a pardon. Besides, baptism, which is among the necessities of salvation, is available or not, according to the mode of its application. Some asperse; others dip the initiated once; while the Greek church practises the trine emersion, to signify the mystery of Christ's three days' burial. Some baptize only adults, because John baptized Christ, when he was perfect man, and perfect God; would that these hyper-theologians were deep in the waters of Jordan. In Ireland formerly some children were baptized in milk; in Africa at present the Bushereen baptizes the child by spitting in his face; (Park's Travels, p. 269) and Philostratus, (Epist. Apol. p. 392) speaks of certain religious sects, who deplete themselves from filth by filth, *πηλῳ πηλὸν καθαίρεισθαι*. These several ways of watering men, women, and children, are considered by the respective votaries of the sprinkle, the dip, and the plunge, as effecting the most opposite consequences; not less so, than the contrary operation of two rivers in Antandria; one of which, according to Aristotle, De Animal. (lib. iii. c. 12) rendered the cattle black which drank of it, and the other which made them white.

Of the other mystery essential to salvation, the supper of the Lord, the utmost dissension prevails as to the nature of the elements administered. The real presence, according to Burnet, (Hist. of the Reform. vol. ii. p. 104) was the last point which the people abandoned, and with



what pains and difficulty this superadded extravagance was curtailed, we may conjecture from the puny and verbal change of transubstantiation to consubstantiation. I almost repine at this reform; for what could be more consecutive, than that the son of God, murdered by his father's will, should be eaten by his votaries. And I cannot repress entirely my dissatisfaction at the reformers withdrawing all respect for the Virgin Mary, yet I of course acquiesce in Dr. Sibbald's opinion; "it is not your Ave Marias, nor these things will do you (Macguire the Catholic) any good: it is *Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi.*" (State Trials).

The next mystery I shall mention, is the Holy and Undivided Trinity. I did expect that the certainty of this miracle had been established beyond suspicion or cavilling, after the demonstration of the Bishop of Gloucester. Yet the Rev.<sup>d</sup> John Mundy, of Manchester, has published a tract, in which he says he has quoted 900 passages to prove the unity of God. Strange infatuation! Unitarian teachers cannot subscribe to the Trinity, which is ascertained demonstratively by bishops, and archbishops, and primates, and popes; which fulfils what is spoken in Ecclesiasticus, "many are in high place of renown: but mysteries are revealed only to the meek." iii. 19. Is not the trinity proved by one reverend person, by the tertian ague; by another, by a pot with three legs? Does not H. Harrington, M.D.,

draw the same conclusion from certain simultaneous sounds? Has not the Rev. Peter Glandolph adopted for the same purposes an Indian's reply to a philosopher, that rain, snow, and ice, are all water? and has not this mystery been illustrated by the wax, wick, and flame of a candle, without taking any credit for the snuff? Many other recondite exemplifications have been used.

Ο Ὀιδίπους ποῦ, καὶ τὰ κλειν' αἰνιγµατα.

I shall close this topic by a poetic colloquy, between the three-in-one, from Themes of Admiration, by T. Heming :

“ The father of the Universe then spake,  
 “ The son and spirit, with the father spake,  
 “ The father, son, and spirit, three-in-one,  
 “ And one-in-three, to one in all did say,  
 “ &c.”

It would be disrespectful, when discoursing on mysteries, to omit the 39 articles—the *via lactea* of the Protestant Church—a church which enjoys the most elaborate and extensive prerogatives: having a Popish liturgy, Calvinistic articles, and an Arminian clergy. Some jacobins would have the sacred 39 revised, and thus they would introduce French principles, and the ruin of our constitution—the wonder of the world. No: let the 39 articles continue as they are; let them pass to future ages, a monument of the

sagacity of our reforming clergy, of the wisdom of parliament, and of the faith of the English people, who if they do not move mountains, sustain them without shrinking. The reform of our church was perfected by that great theologian, Henry the Eighth; as lustre cannot be added to the diamond, so our church cannot be improved. Suppose that incoherencies and contradictions are obvious in the 39 articles; they afford a more vigorous exercise to faith. Never let our ecclesiastics betray any disposition to reconcile the hostile tenets of the Protestant church; and above all things, should any one of their order hesitate, let them, as usual, improve on the punishment inflicted on Adam, and dismiss their conscientious brother naked out of Eden. This will wonderfully enlarge the capacity of the clergy to believe; they will believe even without the commentary of Paley, who though he favored a revision of the 39 articles, abstained from urging the propriety of it, saying "he could not afford to keep a conscience."

Indeed, those clergymen who have dared to doubt the sufficiency of these articles, have manifested extreme impertinence. Did not the Rev. Sydney Smith, whose faculties otherwise do not appear to be of the most absorbent quality, in a note appended to a sermon, express his absolute belief in *every iota* of the 39 articles. So did a worthy friend of Mrs. Simony, in Foote's Cozeners. "Then my Doctor is none of your

schismatics, Madam, he believes in the whole thirty-nine: and so he would if there were nine times as many."

If so many clergy and laymen believe, it is worse than insulting for any one to say, he cannot believe. For what proposition is clearer than that a man may believe whatever he pleases. And for this reason, Jews are odious to God and man; catholics are excluded from the higher offices; and dissenters are reprobated: for as professor Marsh says, "they dissent without a cause," in short, they are obstinate and malicious, rebels to God, and traitors to their king.

To discredit any proposition because it contradicts the understanding, has been astutely exposed. Swift poignantly rebukes such misgiving, "how little do they who quarrel with mysteries, know of the commonest actions of nature, the growth of an animal, of a plant, or of the smallest seed, is a mystery to the wisest man." In this spirit the author of the *Tale of a Tub* wrote sermons.

Dr. Watson, bishop of Landaff, addresses Thomas Paine in the same strain, "This also you refuse to believe, because you cannot account for the propriety of the redemption;" miserable reason! stupid objection! What is there you can account for? Not the germination of a single blade of grass, nor the fall of a leaf of the forest. "Thus writes the experimentalist in chemistry, in his *Apology for the Bible*, and as the



bishop thought it conclusive, he repeated verbatim, the same observation in his *Apology for Christianity*. And I really believe, that neither Paine, nor any other person, could account for the germination of grass, if he believed with Jesus, John, xii. 24. and Paul, "that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." I. Corinth. xv. 37.

Then cometh Dr. Olinthus Gregory, who *demonstrates*, that if we withhold our assent from propositions incomprehensible, we must be universal sceptics, and he would prove the trinity by a verbose display of the bishop's scornful ejaculation. Though causes be not known, yet men, from observing constant consequences, may assume presisting relations or causes equally operating; and this they may do without absurdity, yet doubt or disbelieve nonsensical dogmas, and hearsay miracles, and whimsical traditions, which contradict their uniform experience, and the elements of their reason. But suppose not, how is man's ignorance of what man sees, to promote man's belief in what he does not see, and cannot understand. Yet I freely admit that this argument, or inuendo, which teaches that the efficacy of human ignorance should advance man's faith, tends to introduce a comprehension of all religions. For, admit this operation of ignorance, who should doubt the incarnations of Vishnu or the triad of paganism; or that Thespius of Soli ascended to the place of the depart-

ed, where he saw three genii sitting in a triangle, or any thing else; and I wonder Dr. Olinthus did not apply this catholic logic, to convince those who doubted how a *second* edition of his Encyclopædia should be identical with the first; for some were so incredulous as to conclude that the word *second* was no mystery, but a manifest imposture.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Morality of the Christian Religion.*

THE morality of our holy religion is a favourite theme, and deserves the purest admiration, yet its supreme and distinguishing characteristic is still more exalted. This requires an awful illustration.

The Old and New Testaments, as I have already stated, are completely combined; they are truly in stricter unity than accessaries before, and accessaries after the crime; the same God is common to both. The doctrines therefore of each cannot be repugnant, as some say, but on the contrary, there must be a consent and harmony between them, and indeed, the filiation is so striking, that it must affect the most casual observer. I shall proceed with circumspection.

It is said, the Jews believed in one only God,

while all other nations were polytheists and idolaters. Each proposition is false. Abraham \* was doubtless bred a heathen ; the God of Nahor is thought a heathen deity. (Gen. xxxi. 53.) Laban's images, called his gods, shew that he was not clear of heathen idolatry ; and Jacob's house was infected with it. (Gen. xxxi. 30. xxxv. 2.) When the Jews entered Egypt, they were not exempted from superstition, and on their exode they were sunk† in the lowest practices of idolatry. The Jews believed in local deities,—their God was not single, but pre-eminent. Jethro says, “ I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.” (Exod. xviii.) Some of the Jews were monotheists, but the bulk of the people were not ; their falling off is frequently repeated : even Solomon, the wisest of men, was affected with the common infirmity. It appears then that the earliest Jews were monotheists by courtesy, and that they were obliged to no very edifying school for their improvement in orthodoxy ; for “ the Jews‡ came out of the Babylonian captivity more firm believers of the unity of God, and more averse to idolatry, than they were when they went into

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\* “ Imperfectness of Heathen Morality,” prefixed to Cumberland's Law of Nature.

† Warburton's Divine Legation, book v. sec. 2.

‡ Imperfectness, &c. p. 13.

captivity." This also affords the Jews no great triumph over the people of other nations.

The Jews were anthropomorphites; so were the Fathers of the Church. (Warburton, Div. Legation, book iii. sec. 4). Laud\* also seems to have inclined to the same opinion; and how far Paley differed from them, who wrote a dissertation on "the Personality of the Deity," I leave his friends to determine.

In this the Jews were not particular. Clemens† of Alexandria says, "the Ethiopians represent their gods black, and flat nosed; the Thracians theirs, swarthy and blue eyed, and they assimilate the minds of their gods to their own." So the Hebrews represented the god of the Hebrews a very Jew in his partiality and prejudice; and with the same overweening presumption, they reputed the centre ‡ of the earth the middle of Jerusalem. They declared that God called them "a holy people," "a chosen people," "a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Why?—was it because they were most moral, most humane, most philanthropical, most just,

\* The archbishop said, "it is not lawful to make a picture of God the Father, but it is lawful to make a picture of Christ, and Christ is called the express image of his Father." State Trials, vol. i. p. 461.

† Stromata, lib. vii. p. 711.

‡ Grotius, de J. B. et Pacis, lib. ii. chap. xxii. § 13. Selden, de J. Nat. and G. lib. ii. chap. ii. p. 280.



most generous? no : there never existed a people pretending to civilized life, more dissocial, unkind, and unrelenting. “Go,” said Saul to the Kenites, “depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them, for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.” (I. Samuel, xv. 6.) Yet, for this individual act of humanity and gratitude, the Jewish legends state, that God repented that he raised Saul to be king.

The Jews represented their God as exerting a special providence in destroying nations for their service: “I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.” Under false pretences they robbed, by God’s order, the Egyptians, and they murdered or made captive the Shechemites contrary to the most solemn assurances.

If such be the character of the God of the Jews, how can the same, when God of the Christians, abound in all the charities. To believe this, God must have been reformed, or human intelligence is inverted. Yet it is insisted, that the Gospels are the sanctuaries of morality, nay, the very well-head of all the virtues, and the only source of them. As to philosophy, and philosophers, they are utterly excluded from participating in the instruction of mankind. Lactantius and Theodoret, and the like, revile the ancient sages, calling them dotards, fools, and asses ; and

what *divine* has not been equally eloquent. Bishop Hurd called David Hume “a puny dialectician from the north;” and in speaking of Voltaire and Rousseau, he affirmed, “it is neither parts nor logic that has made them philosophers, but infidelity only.” The latter declaimers against philosophy, during twenty-five years of war for the restoration of the Bourbons, are unbounded in their abuse, and numerous beyond computation. Yet the philosophers were not utterly absurd and stupid, even before the revelation of Christianity. Pythagoras\* and his followers said no one was wise but God. The Stoics,† that God was the beginning, middle, and end of all things. These were tolerable opinions for men not illumined with the divine light of the Gospel. I admit, however, that the philosophers were not anthropomorphites, indeed, the Epicureans treated this opinion most irreverently. (Cicero, de Nat. Deorum, lib. i, p. 202.) Of course they probably would not have believed that any man “knew God face to face.” And Seneca‡ implied as much, when he said, “no one knows God, many speak ill of him with impunity.”

\* Μηδεια γαρ ειναι σοφον ανθρωπον αλλ' η θεον. Diog. Laert. p. 8. Phocylides said the same. Apud Stobæum, p. 37.

† Ζευς αρχη, Ζευς μεσος Διος παντα τετυκται. Plutarch, Moral. p. 646.

‡ “Nemo novit Deum, multi de illo male existimant impune.” Epist. 31.

The philosophers did not believe that "the Lord's name is jealous." *Exod.* xxxiv. Nor that he was angry, nor that he sacrificed nations in his vengeance. Cicero\* on the contrary affirms, that all philosophers agreed that God never was angry, and never injured any one. The philosophers, I must also admit, did not generally believe in miracles; and I verily think that they would have denied that the sun's course was stopped, in order that the Jews might continue their massacre, though they might have been so pagan as to have acquiesced in Homer's fancy, when the poet feigned, that on the return of Ulysses to Ithaca, the sun loitered beneath the horizon, purposely that the hero might enjoy with Penelope the luxury of sad recollections, intermixed with connubial delights. *Odyss.* lib. xxii. v. 242 and 345.

The philosophers were also but moderately addicted to imprecations or deprecations; to simple praying, or to pious orgies and processions, and the like: and *Zaleucus* said, "God is not honoured by festivals or exhibitions, like a bad man, but by virtuous and just actions." *Apud Stobæum*, p. 279. They also had so little respect for faith, that saving and pre-eminent Christian qualification, that it was their common

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\* "At hoc quidem commune est omnium philosophorum, nunquam nec irasci deum, nec nocere." *De Officiis*, lib. iii.

doctrine, that virtue was the consummation of man's nature. Apud Stobæum, p. 7.

Having shown the inferiority, or the *difference* between the philosophers and the inspired, it will be necessary to consider the moral doctrines of the Christian religion, for which it is so rapturously applauded; and certainly no religion wants apophthegms of distinguished equity. They grace every superstition, though how far they have been eventually repealed by contrary dogmas and decisions, has little occupied the attention of mankind. Thus, it is said, as if ashamed of the decrees and execution of passionate and heedless cruelty and destruction. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers, every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Deut. xxiv. Yet after this proclamation, how many nations and people were indiscriminately destroyed, and what Jew has marked the departure from this decision?—what Christian has adverted to it?—what Christians (they are few and fearful) have expressed adhorrence at the iniquitous spoil and massacre of nations by the Jews, acting, as they presume, under God's command? Even Bishop Watson treats with comparative satisfaction the extirpation of the seven nations, Apology, p. 6, while thousands consider the Jews on those occasions as goodly executioners of the divine wrath.

It happens also, that not only equitable senti-



ments are defeated by divine commands, and by their merciless execution, but casual good is repealed by frequent and enforced evil; and this in the Gospels. It is said, "do unto all men as you would they should do unto you :"\* if this were intended to operate truly, would it not be supported by expressions inculcating mutual reserve, and liberality, and independence; yet on the contrary it is said, "he that is not with me is against me," and this is announced under tremendous penalties.

It is affirmed that Christianity teaches brotherly forgiveness in a manner which no philosopher ever imagined, and the *seventy times seven* are quoted with great effect; but Jesus circumscribes this fraternal reconciliation, commanding brother to pursue brother with a stranger's vengeance; thus—"but if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican." Matt. xviii.

It is also boastingly repeated, "bless them that curse you:" yet even the fig-tree withered under the curse of Christ. Paul cursed all those

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\* This advice Mr. Ensor has shewn to have been inculcated in many ways by pagans. I shall add two additional instances to his numerous list. "Antoninus Pius senatui tantum detulit imperator, quantum cum privatus esset, deferri sibi ab alio principe obtabat." J. Capit. in Ant. Pio, 6.—Trajan said, "talem se imperatorem esse privatis quales esse sibi imperatores privatus optasset. Eutropius, viii. 2.

who may preach any Gospel except "that which we have preached unto you." Gal. i. 8. The protestant Church adopts also a litany of curses, "to which the people cry, amen."

*Dira detestatio*

*Nulla expiatur victima.*

Thus also in Greece they anathematize, says Gell, by casting stones together, the devotee repeating a curse with every stone he throws; "and as every man is supposed to be cursed for good reason, it becomes the duty of every good Christian to add at least one stone to the heap."

It is also esteemed a sublimated beneficence, "love your enemies." Yet how are mere disbelievers in Jesus menaced; "love your enemies," is changed to hate your enemies; nay more, for those who are not enemies, but merely indifferent to him and his pretensions, are most fearfully denounced; indeed it may be retorted on this superlative preacher of love to enemies, "for if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" Matt. v. Observe, besides, how Jesus exemplifies his direction of love to enemies: "And whosoever shall not receive you (his apostles) nor hear your word, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." Matt. x. Again; "and it shall come to

pass, that every soul which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed among the people." Acts, iii. 23. "Forgive your *enemies*," said Jesus, yet the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, apply to the avenging Jesus, "sit thou on my right until I make thine *enemies* thy footstool."\* Thus then we perceive the amount of Gospel morality, when texts are confronted, and deeds are adduced to determine the contradiction.

No : morality is verbiage ; and faith in Jesus Christ predominates and absorbs all considerations ; " every spirit that confesseth that Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth that Christ is not come in the flesh is not of God." 1 John, iv. Morality is scarcely incidental. Jesus, the apostles, the fathers, and popes, magnify faith till morals are forgotten ; and Luther, the mighty reformer, as sturdily contemned moral conduct in comparison to faith, as if he had sat in the chair of St. Peter : in his sermon, *adversus Regem*, he says, it is sacrilegious and impious to endeavour to please God by works, and not by unique faith ; "*sacrilegium est et impietas velle placare Deo per opera, et non per solam fidem.*" Our holy Church, the

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\* Abdullah, on being installed governor of Damascus, his footstool was made of the mutilated bodies of seventy chiefs of the Omniadæ, who were beaten to death with clubs, in his presence. *Price*. This was downright mercy, in comparison to the teacher of forgiveness.

paragon of establishments, sinks morality still lower, while it exalts the prerogative of faith : “ Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit, are not pleasant to God, for as they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ ; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.”

Article xiii. Do these opinions, dogmas, and denunciations, promote reason or utility, or morality ? No : the Christian religion aims at more important objects, namely, faith in Christ Jesu, and obedience to creeds and articles, and priests.

Suppose, however, that all that is well said in the Gospels, is neither impaired nor contravened by subsequent relations ; suppose that what is bad was omitted, as the improvidence taught, “ take no heed of to-morrow.” Matt. vi. Luke, xii. as the abject submission to repeated violence, Matt. v. 42 ; as the hideous insensibility inculcated ; “ let the dead bury the dead,” when a son asked Jesus permission to go and bury his father. Matt. viii. 22. Mark, ix. 61. Suppose this and the like expunged, yet still how imperfect are the Gospels as a manual of morals. This is generally admitted by the most heated panegyrists of Christianity ; and to this Dr. Magee perhaps alludes in saying, “ in truth, the object of our Saviour’s life was to supply the subject, not to promulgate the doctrines of the Gospel ;” this our grave author says was to be effected “ by



those to whom our Lord promised the unerring aid of the holy spirit." No doubt the author of the atonement is orthodox, and it is equally to be inferred, that what the apostles were to Christ, the clergy are to the apostles, who have been and are busily employed in teaching and preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, which fulfils what was said by Paul, 1 Corinth. i. 21, "for after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew God, it pleased God *by the foolishness of preaching* to save them that believe."

Thus we continue to be told, amidst the eternal theme of faith, faith, faith, that Christianity promotes the most enlightened morality, and that to this revelation the world is indebted for all the benefits which it enjoys; nor is this so extraordinary when Chateaubriand insists, that "Christianity has invented the organ, and given sighs to brass." I marvel this friend of legitimacy and Christianity did not typify these inventions by Paul's "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." To Christianity is also attributed the abolition of the slave-trade; yet to what efficacy can that system pretend, which had been nugatory for many centuries. Burgess, Bishop of St. David, says, "that St. Paul preached the Gospel in Britain, is beyond controversy." Suppose, however, that the Gospel was not preached till afterward; was there not in the 14th century a slave-market for native Britons at Bristol? nor has the slave-trade been abolished by the British legislature more than a few

years; and at this day many subjects of Britain are slave-holders, and even the present Christian missionaries in Africa are slave-masters. The disposition to abolish slavery in England is not because we are Christians, but because we are men. Christ and his disciples saw slaves in all directions, yet not one of them offered a hint at their redemption.

It is rather presumptuous to attribute an amelioration in society to the influence of Christianity, when the world declined from worse, to worse after the promulgation, and with the extension of Christianity, and when after it had been preached, and was triumphant for many centuries, the utmost ignorance,\* stupidity, and vice possessed all Europe. If the world declined for many centuries after Christianity was established, by what logic should the subsequent restoration or improvement of society be attributed to Christianity?

Consider Christianity by itself, and estimate its incidental influence. Harrington says, "there never was a war of religion but since Christianity." Oceana, p. 59. How many wars have

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\* The first William of Sicily employed Musselmen as his guards and ministers. Frederick the Second was nearly as favourable to them. And is it not certain that the believers in Mahomet were the restorers of science and literature in Europe? When the Spanish king dismissed the Musselmen from his territory, he expatriated his most valuable subjects.

Christians waged with Christians for religion's sake :

— Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,  
 Prepar'd to fight for shadows of no worth ;  
 While truths, on which eternal things depend,  
 Find not, or hardly find, a friend.

What wars, massacres, and persecutions, have harassed the different nations of Europe by Christian sectaries ! Even at this instant, dreadful are the excesses which Catholics commit against Protestants at Nismes and its vicinage. In Greece also the pastors of the Greek church anxiously excite a general hatred against all religions, particularly the Roman Catholics. (Bartholdy's Travels.) In the British empire how active are the Protestant clergy against Catholics and Dissenters, who would be emancipated ; and does not Bishop Burgess piteously lament that the Unitarians are tolerated. How malevolently do the two Bible Societies in Great Britain charge and retort on each other. Professor Marsh accuses the members of one of these bodies with having forfeited both *truth* and *candour*. Their champion replies, " the spirit of papacy must be at the bottom of these observations." Observe, both are of the Protestant church, and this exasperates their animosity.

Simia quam similis turpissima bestia vobis.

But it may be said, that these wars, dissensions,

and enmities, are not attributable to Christianity. Yet Christ said, “suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth; I tell you nay; but rather division,” &c. Luke, xii. 51. If not attributable to Christianity, why have they been associated with it in every epoch of its existence, from its promulgation to the present hour. The Jewish religion, the root of the Christian church, began with partiality and fratricide, and this execrable character was impressed on its votaries in all ages, even till the siege of Jerusalem, when the danger without could not suspend the animosity of its people against each other, relative to some points of dogmatism. And how much better were the Christians? Recur to the beginning of Christianity; consider subsequent events, and the conduct of the professors of the true faith; and then decide, whether what has happened is in opposition or conformity to the earliest opinions and practices of Christians. When Christ was alive, his disciples “disputed among themselves who should be greatest.” Mark, ix. Luke, xxii. they were ambitious, and expressed their resentment against each other. Matt. xx. And afterward “the contention was so great that they departed asunder one from another.” Acts, xv. 38. Again: one disciple betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, yet a common robber refused to betray Charles the Second, of whom he was no partizan, for thirty thousand pounds. Another disciple flattered Jesus, then denied him, and



again and again, with imprecations; "then began he to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man." Matt. xxvi. Do modern Christians, or Jews, or Hindus, or outcasts, exhibit more presumption,\* enmity, weakness, and wickedness, than those very men who received the gospelled radiance directly from Christ's self, and who were chosen to bear testimony of him, and his doctrine, and his divinity. And how much more amicable, provident, and virtuous were Christians immediately after the crucifixion and resurrection, and all the marvels attending on that catastrophe. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." 1 Corinth. i. 12. Nor was the morality of the first Christians more exemplary; "for ye are carnal, for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions." *ibid*, iii. 3. Again: "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers." *ibid*. vi. 6. Again: "nay, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." Such were the Christians in the lifetime of Christ, and during the ministry of Paul. Thus I have shewn,

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\* This holy religion also conjured up a cause of new contention among men, for this world was not sufficiently fruitful in topics of pitiful ambition. James and John sought Jesus to allow them to sit on his right hand and on his left in his glory. Mark, x. 37.; and thus to degrade the others. "And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John." xli.

that morality is not the object of Christianity ; and that dissension, enmity, and selfishness began with the first Christians, and have been continued through every age, even to the present day, when the apocalyptic vision is completed, and the Gospel is preached in every tongue, and to all nations. Truly they discredit our transcendent religion, who consider that it could descend to social purposes of temporal utility. It is high above all height.

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## CHAP. VII.

### *Consolation of Religion.*

PALEY admits that teaching morality was not the primary end of the mission of Christ ; (Evidences, &c. p. 335) and that morality, properly speaking, cannot be a subject of discovery ; but that the object of the Christian dispensation was principally to establish proofs of a future state of rewards and punishments. *ibid*, p. 358. If so, the pretensions of this revelation are equally vain, as they also were anticipated ; for a state of future rewards and punishments, had long been taught by many priests and legislators : by so many indeed, that Warburton considered Moses unique in not availing himself of it in his machinery of government. I cannot apprehend how these

dogmas could be reputed a Christian revelation, nor why a special mission from heaven was requisite to inculcate what the prophets of the captivity had learned in Babylonia,\* and had taught in Palestine many centuries before the birth of Christ, and which a large majority of the Jews had adopted among the tenets of their creed.

But Jesus, it may be said, confirmed the received dogma of a future state; I shall state his testimonials; they are very affecting. Christ said, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, where he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Luke, xx. 37. This proof of the resurrection of the dead is far beyond ordinary apprehensions. From the burning bush of Moses I proceed to another proof afforded by Christ of the resurrection: "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." This is another extraordinary argument, and wonderfully illustrated; yet two thirds of the wonder is to come. Christ, in the foregoing sentence, says, he shall be three days and three nights in the heart of

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\* Much of the Christian dispensation seems referable to the same country, or to those connected with it. God, devil, and Redeemer, are not Jewish but Persian. Plutarch, Moral. p. 272, there was in the Persian Liturgy, Oromazes and Arimanius, and Mithris between both, *μισον δε αμφοιν τον Μιθρην*.

the earth ; yet at his own crucifixion, he said to one of the malefactors, “ to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”\* Luke, xxiii. 43. Here, then, we ascertain, that Paradise is in the heart of the earth ; nor is this all, for in the apostles’ creed it is said, Jesus Christ “ was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell.” Then Christ was at the same time in hell, and in paradise, both which are in the heart of the earth, as Jonas was in the heart of the whale ; he who is not convinced by these proofs, has his heart hardened ; truly we may say of Christ, this greatest of all prophets “ he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.” Eccles. xlviii. 18.

The resurrection of Jesus is also esteemed corroborative, that life and immortality were brought to light by him. No doubt it was very decisive to the chosen few (*though some doubted*), who were gratified by his re-appearance among them. Yet I own I am surprised that those who urge this, omit what to me seems a more decisive proof of the resurrection, as follows, “ And the graves were opened, many bodies of saints which slept arose ; and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.” (Matt. xxvii.

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\* This word is like the doctrine, Persian. Julius Pollux says, the word paradise is barbarous, and obtained from the Persians.—*Onomasticon*, lib. ix. c. 3.



52). For though an infusion of the Holy Ghost, humanized by a virgin, should die, and revive, and ascend beyond mortal ken, yet ordinary men might not necessarily receive any cheering anticipations from so novel and peculiar an event; but when many bodies of saints sympathised with Christ's resurrection, and came out of their graves, and visited many in the holy city; the inducement for believing the resurrection of all mankind at the day of judgment is stronger than demonstration.

We come now to the felicity derived from life and immortality, as proved and ascertained by the Gospels. That many should zealously aspire for a situation in heaven, is agreeable to the *wisdom* of the world,

Cælum ipsum petimus stultitia.

And no doubt the change of dead men to living angels, was pleasingly illustrated by the device of a grub turned butterfly. However, though many should wish to live hereafter and be happy; yet it does not follow that they should be gratified with the prospect of a resurrection coupled with the probability of eternal misery. How then does the state of future rewards and punishments affect mankind as taught by the Gospel? Are those who lived before the mission of Christ, to be consigned to heaven or hell; if to hell, and Dante cannot afford his adored Virgil a better retreat, it is no delight to them, and if they may

be saved by using their natural reason, they are more favoured than those who have been born since Christ, for reason will not avail them.

I do not know to what description of persons this boasted doctrine can be satisfactory ; not to the mighty, for God is no respecter of persons, and as the lords of the earth have been less controlled, and more flattered and corrupted, potentates and their minions will hold an inverted prerogative at the day of judgment: not to “ those who love salutations in the market-place, and the chief seats in the synagogue, and the uppermost rooms in feasts, &c. these shall receive greater damnation.” (Mark, xii.) Nor can this doctrine gratify the rich, “ how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven ; ” and again, “ it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Mark, x.) Again, “ Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation ; wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger ; wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep.” Can these dicta of Christ rejoice bishops and archbishops, who are among the richest and most plethoric ? And what consolation is the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, who were struck dead for withholding a portion of their property, which they had destined for the poor, when the clergy seized to their own use the funds of the poor, and their successors retain them ? What conso-

lation is Christianity to those who tithe the poor man's labour, and add want to his scanty board? "The bread of the needy is their life, he that defraudeth him thereof, is a man of blood." (xxxiv. 20.) Can it console politicians, those who "do evil that good may come: whose damnation is just." (Paul, Romans, iii. 8.)

Who can it console? Not professional men? "Wo unto you also, ye lawyers; for ye lade men with burthens grievous to be borne, &c." (Luke, xi). Not the inferior classes? No: not the very best of them? The Rev. Mr. Crabbe, one of the shrewdest observers of his time, and who by his pursuits had the best means of forming a just opinion on this point, says,

I have often read  
Of happy peasants on their dying bed.

This he denies from experience, and the most favourable account that he can truly give of their feelings at the conclusion of life is,

At best a sad submission to their doom,  
Which turning from the danger, lets it come.

How can such doctrines dispose mankind to anticipate futurity with pleasure? "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) Who imagines he can become thus regenerated? No wonder the disciples were amazed and alarmed at such declarations; "And they were asto-

nished out of measure, saying among themselves, who then can be saved?" (Mark, x. 26). What was their consolation? "And Jesus looking upon them saith: with men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." (ibid. xxvii.) Salvation is then possible to Omnipotence.

How can this religion, as by law established, afford consolation, or confidence, or happiness, to the opulent or the poor, or the low or the exalted. All by nature vicious, prone to sin, sins multiform and infinite; punishments, the consequence—punishments excruciating and eternal. What must this produce—happiness? No! but morbid sorrow, inevitable misery, in all those who sincerely and firmly believe. But it may be said, I omit that heaven is also mentioned, aye, "the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed," true it is; and fear is enlivened by hope. Both means of seduction were practised to gain proselytes. The teachers of Christianity were *all things to all men*; they were *wise as serpents, and innocent as doves*. They talked of heaven, but they inculcated hell: they had their reasons.

Fear walks the world, and bows th' astonish'd soul.

Faith is the sum of favour, damnation the grand sanction. "He\* that believeth not shall

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\* This is much more decisive than the Koran. "Verily, those who believe both Jesus, and Nazareens, and Zabians,



be damned. (Mark, xvi). The Athanasian creed ends to the same effect, "this is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." And Horsley adds, "remember always to inculcate, that, in this respect our faith is no less defective than our works, it is not by the merit of our works that we are justified: that there is no hope for any merits of our own, but through the efficacy of our Lord's atonement." Is it consolatory that we can have no merit of any kind, while there is no end to our demerits? Who can believe this, and not fall prostrate in despair. Yet this religion is consolatory!! with just as much propriety as Chateaubriand, that culler of simples in Palestine, has named *hell* among his enumerated *beauties*\* of Christianity. Is it consolatory to believe, that sin is followed by perdition, and that man is most sinful, "how much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like

whosoever of these believe in God and the last day, and do good works, have their reward with the Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they be affected with sorrow." Surat, ii. 59.

\* Chateaubriand is not singular. The Rev. Thomas Wintle ends his discourses on the *Beatitudes*, by suggesting, that sinners may hereafter "experience a change which will render them more susceptible of pain and anguish than what can be now felt, when the most delicate parts of the present texture are suffering from the most excruciating disorders or defects. A very awful consideration this."

water." Is it consolatory to believe, "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment?" (Matt. xii. 36.) Is it consolatory to hear, that "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii. 13.) And afterward, "Many\* are called, but few chosen." (xx. 16.) Nor is the *consolatory* sequel of man's catastrophe to be omitted, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." (II. Thess. i.) Yet, as if these nameless horrors were not sufficiently overwhelming, the Rev. H. Kett, unable himself to do justice to the terrors of perdition, invokes poetry, and refers his readers to Dante's *Inferno*. Why not to Jeremy Taylor,—“At the day of judgment, when that world and this, and all that shall be born hereafter, shall pass through the same red sea, and be all baptized in the same fire, and be involved in the same cloud, in which shall be thunderings and ter-

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\* "There be many created, but few shall be saved." Esdras, viii. 3.

rors infinite; every man's fear shall be increased by his neighbour's shrieks, and the amazement that all the world shall be in, shall unite as the sparks of a raging furnace into a globe of fire, and roll upon its own principle, and increase by direct appearances and intolerable reflections. That shriek must needs be terrible, when millions of men and women," &c. Thus the preacher of this consolatory religion proceeds. While we are informed, perdition forsooth not being amply aggravated, that the damned shall be *salted with fire*, which means, immortal in the midst of flames. Is this consolatory? is it not monstrous, stupifying, maddening, to believe that even a few human beings might endure such interminable agony? but to imagine that self and friends may be approaching jeopardy eternal, must cause despair, and end in distraction. And eventually, true Christians, that is, conscientious believers in man's proneness to sin and hell's torments, are frequently bereft of reason. The Rev. Dr. Skelton, a man of vigorous faculties and exemplary virtue, doubted his salvation, and became hypochondriacal. (His Life, by Brody, p. 110.) To enumerate particular instances of a similar alienation of mind, would be tedious. When Black, M. D., states on the authority of Mr. Gosna, apothecary of Bedlam, that from 1772 to 1787, one eighth of the cases of insanity originated in a lively belief in Christianity. Our holy religion supports faith in Christ, and

submission to the priesthood, by the most fearful denunciations of vengeance ; these are the means and object of our spiritual teachers. It would be a disgrace to their transcendental theme, and their exalted ministry, to suppose that they would inculcate reason, morality, liberty, and happiness ; these are mundane and merely philosophical topics. They, on the contrary, require their followers apostolically to sacrifice temporal for eternal concerns ; and they labour incessantly to appropriate to themselves all the good things of the earth, in order to prevent their flocks from sinning, and suffering by their enjoyments.

THE END.













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